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ELIZABETH PLANTAGENET.

DAUGHTER OF KING EDWARD IV.

QUEEN OF KING HENRY VII.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

RIVAL HOUSES

OF

YORK AND LANCASTER,

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL:

EMBRACING

A PERIOD OF ENGLISH HISTORY

FROM

THE ACCESSION OF RICHARD II. TO THE DEATH OF HENRY VII.

BY EMMA ROBERTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

It is with much diffidence that a pen so untried offers its first attempt in historical composition to the public eye. Attracted by the grandeur of the subject, and strongly induced to enter a field comparatively neglected by former writers, the author has perhaps trusted too securely to the interest attached to the period which she has endeavoured to illustrate, and ventured upon a theme which required higher and more varied powers.

Amid the mass of materials to be found in the library of the British Museum, the author had to choose those which would be generally acceptable to the reading portion of the community: and her object has been to unite amusement with information, to divest antiquarianism of its dryness, and to give life and motion to the picture of other days, by the animated narrations of contemporary historians.

Entering upon her task unknown and unassisted, the author has to regret that her work was very far advanced before she became acquainted with those gentlemen to whose kindness in pointing out sources of information she is, notwithstanding so great a disadvantage, deeply indebted. To E. A. Kendall, Esq. who supplied the whole of the account of Sir Richard Whittington, she begs to offer her most grateful acknowledgements. From N. H. Nicolas, Esq. though unable to avail herself from the cause already stated of the facilities offered by his extensive researches, she has obtained many important facts; and she eagerly seizes the present opportunity to express, however briefly, her deep sense of the untiring kindness of Dr. Meyrick, whose friendly zeal in her service is sufficiently evinced by the continual recurrence of his name in her pages, as the source whence information equally valuable and interesting has been derived. To Dr. Meyrick's high reputation the author's panegyric can add nothing, but she feels infinite pleasure in offering the weak tribute of her thanks for the numberless instances of kindness which she has, in common with all those

persons who have sought his assistance, invariably experienced. To J. T. Smith, Esq. of the British Museum the author has also the gratifying duty of expressing her obligations.

Though conscious that there are many imperfections in her work, for which some apology might be deemed necessary, it would perhaps be impertinent to detain the reader with explanations and excuses; but it seems to be a duty which the author owes to herself, to point out an oversight which occurs in stating that Eleanor Cobham Duchess of Gloucester bore the name, instead of the title, of one of our earliest and most illustrious martyrs; an error which did not strike her until the work had passed through the press and had become irremediable. For the typographical mistakes she claims the usual indulgence.

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ERRATA TO VOL. I.

The Reader is requested to correct the following typographical errors:

Page 129, 11th line, for "war target" read *war targets*
242, 24th line, for "satarizes" read *satirizes*
265, 15th line, omit "that" before *he*
318, 2d line, supply *his* before "dissolution"
322, 9th line, for "politically" read *politicly*
327, 21st line, supply *a* before "father"
336, 14th line, for "vain a" read *a vain*
371, 14th line, for "danger" read *dangers*

MEMOIRS

OF THE

RIVAL HOUSES

OF

YORK AND LANCASTER.

CHAPTER I.

State of Society—Origin of the House of Lancaster—Gifts of Henry III. to Edmond Crouchback—Thomas, Earl of Lancaster—his rebellion and death—Henry, Earl of Lancaster—Henry Grismond, Duke of Lancaster—his eminent services—John of Ghent—Campaign in Spain—Second marriage of the Duke of Lancaster with a Princess of Castile—Contention between the Black Prince and John of Ghent—Haughty disposition and despotic bearing of John of Ghent—Dispute between Wickliffe and the prelacy—Riot of the citizens—Jealousy of John of Ghent—Apprehensions of the Princess Joan—Last illness of Edward III.—Proceedings of the Council—State of the Kingdom—Enmity to John of Ghent—John of Ghent's Speech in Parliament—Violation of Sanctuary—Expedition to Bretagne—Incursion of the Scots—Absence of the King's uncles—Insurrection of the Commons—Outrages of the Insurgents—Death of Wat Tyler—Return of the Duke of Lancaster—Dispute between John of Ghent and the Earl of Northumberland—Marriage of Richard II.

CHAP. I.

r a period of English history when the pas- of a half civilized people were under very t controul, when the laws were disregarded by e who were strong enough to defy them, and ces and nobles, only intent upon personal ag- dizement, wasted blood and treasure in the

CHAP. I. pursuit of their own selfish interests trampling on the rights of the weak and the defenceless; revolutions and convulsions in the state were necessarily of frequent occurrence. The annals of the middle ages are little more than records of crime and misery, of human vice and human wretchedness; but, mingled with transactions of the most revolting nature are deeds of martial heroism and knightly courtesy which cast a brilliant lustre over the gloomy page. Though shuddering at the vices of our ancestors, we pay an involuntary tribute of respect to their valour; whilst the barbaric splendour of a rude yet chivalrous age, reconciles us to the perusal of its appalling atrocities. The old Chronicles of England furnish us with abundant proof of the reckless licentiousness of manners which prevailed in every class of society. The true in-
terests of the state were forgotten, or wilfi
neglected in the inordinate ambition and insat
rapacity of the great, whilst the lower orders,
held in bondage by chains and yokes of iron, w
discontented and factious, ready at every favo
able opportunity to rise upon their oppres
and, during their brief triumph over regal or
gisterial authority, instigated by a blind
sought revenge alone, in the perpetration
wanton and indiscriminate slaughter. Religio
these unhappy times was only a name and the
precepts of Christianity were not inculcated b
ministers. Bigotry, superstition and fanatic
deformed the established church, and to the t
of crowned heads, the insolent pride of the nob
and the brutal ferocity of the populace, wa su

added an intolerant and barbarous priesthood. During the space of five centuries from the invasion of the Norman Conqueror, England was governed by a succession of monarchs, who, following mistaken views of glory, or only intent upon the gratification of selfish indulgence, either plunged into hopeless and unnecessary wars or revelled in luxurious profusion at home. To the wild projects of the crusades succeeded the equally visionary and favourite attempt to subjugate the neighbouring realm of France, the expensive and unwarrantable pursuits of the warlike Richard, and the martial Edwards and Henrys; whilst the degenerate successors of these illustrious heroes, by their extravagance, folly and mis-government, never failed to kindle the torch of rebellion in the hearts of their subjects and to bring fire and sword into the bosom of their suffering country. CHAP. I.

Amid the numerous civil wars which have deluged England with blood, the struggles of a turbulent nobility for power, the fierce combats between contending claimants for a disputed crown, or the attempts made by the commons to wrest civil and religious liberty from the strong hand which denied the boon, there is no domestic strife recorded in our annals, the history of which is more interesting, more fertile in great events and romantic incidents, than the long and sanguinary contest between the White and the Red Roses.

The royal house of Lancaster dates its origin from the reign of Henry III., and the immense wealth heaped by that monarch upon Edmond, surnamed

CHAP. I. Crouchback or Crossed-back, his son, laid the foundation of that overpowering greatness, which, under his unfortunate descendant Richard II., had arrived to such a height of grandeur as not only to menace but to seize the crown. A brief sketch of the rise progress and fortunes of this potent family will display the dangerous ascendance which it gained in the state during the four succeeding reigns. Henry III. loaded his son Edmond, with the spoils of the rebellious barons: besides the lands of the Earl Ferrers, of the Earl of Derby and of Simon Mountford Earl of Leicester, the indulgent monarch gave his favourite son the custody of the castles of Kearmardin and Cardigan. Edmond was also created Earl of Chester and invested by Pope Innocent with the kingdoms of Sicily and Apulia, an unsubstantial honour, compared with the lavish favours which he received from his bounteous parent's hands. A modern writer* has traced the inordinate wealth, the foundation of equally inordinate ambition of the House of Lancaster, to this fatal gift of the Pope. Unable to conquer the kingdom of Sicily with his own resources, the pontiff politicly inveigled Henry III. into the expensive undertaking. The credulous king wept for joy at the investiture of his son, performed in London in 1255 by the Bishop of Bononia, but being compelled to apply for extravagant grants to carry on the war, the barons firmly refused to countenance so chimerical a project, and failing to convince the king by their arguments of the folly

* Mr. Astle, in an interesting paper to be found in the fourth volume of the Archæologia.

of lavishing his treasures in a fruitless attempt upon a distant country, after suffering repeated unjust exactions, flew at length to arms. The bitter contention between Henry and his barons ended in the total ruin of the confederates. Edmond amply remunerated for the loss of his kingdom by the possession of their forfeited estates, transmitted to his descendants an inheritance so vast and overpowering, that they became too great for subjects and Richard II. fell beneath the superior influence of Henry of Lancaster. Though placed upon the throne without a stroke, a stream of blood followed the usurpation of Bolingbroke which flowed with little cessation for the space of an hundred and fifty years. The torrent gushed forth immediately after the accession of Henry IV., was augmented in the reign of his son by the vital current of Cambridge and of Scroope, swelled into a flood during the civil wars between the Roses and ceased not throughout the dominion of the Tudors until not an object remained for that cruel jealousy, so fatally aroused by the ambitious projects of the houses of Lancaster and of York. Taught an inhuman lesson by the overthrow of Richard II., of Henry VI., of Edward V., and of Richard III., English monarchs imitated the policy of Eastern tyrants and would endure no rival, however distant to the throne. Elizabeth was only spared because she stood in the path of a stronger competitor, Mary Stuart, and Mary's life was sacrificed when she fell into the power of one whose claim she had presumed to dispute.

To return to the immediate subject before us,

CHAP. I. Henry III. in addition to the grants already mentioned, conferred upon his second son, Edmond, the castles of Sherborne in Dorsetshire and of Kenilworth in Warwickshire, with all the lands attached to each: to these magnificent donations he added the honour earldom castle and town of Lancaster "with divers other manors and castles."*

Edmond thus splendidly endowed, augmented his riches by a marriage with Aveline sole heiress of the Earl of Albemarle, who dying, without issue, bequeathed to him the whole of her vast possessions. In addition to his numerous estates he procured valuable grants from his brother Edward I., and his avarice or his merits knowing no bounds, he obtained from his mother Queen Eleanor, the houses and gardens purchased by her from the Provost and Canons of Montjoy, built by Peter de Savoy her uncle, in the suburbs of London, afterwards entitled the Palace of the Savoy.

Thomas Plantagenet eldest son of Edmond by Blanche of Artois, his second wife, became at his father's death, in 1296, Earl of Lancaster Leicester and Derby, and in right of his wife, of Lincoln. With this lady, daughter of Henry Lacy Earl of Lincoln, he obtained twenty-five manors in Yorkshire, eighteen in Lancashire, one in Leicestershire and one in Northamptonshire. This accumulation of wealth and power was speedily turned against the crown. The weak reign of Edward II. offered strong temptation to factious and ambitious nobles and the Earl of Lancaster, stigmatized as the "demon of treachery," wrested the reins of govern-

* Nicholson's History of Lancaster.

ment from his pusillanimous kinsman. It would be equally painful and unnecessary to follow him through his bold career of crime: the chief of a potent confederacy, he was at one time at the head of administration, at another in arms against the existing authorities and at length, in 1322, when upon his march to join a body of Scots, his power was arrested by Edward's friends, and this bane of his country, this mirror of turbulent traitors, as he is styled by Andrews, expiated his manifold offences on a scaffold. He was beheaded at his own castle of Pontefract with circumstances which mark the brutality of the times. CHAP. I.

Previous to the fatal feuds which broke out between Edward II. and his nobles, the Earl of Lancaster had received many favours from the hands of his misguided sovereign; and during the short interval of peace which ensued between them, the king confirmed a grant of their grandmother's lands in France to him and his brother Henry. Upon his death and attainder his extensive possessions were forfeited to the crown, and an enormous portion was immediately granted to the rapacious favourites the Spencers.

The house of Lancaster did not however remain long under a cloud, many bitter lessons were still necessary to teach monarchs the impolicy of raising the fallen fortunes of princes, ruined in strong though unsuccessful attempts against the throne. The honours, riches and power of the condemned traitor, who died without offspring, were re-united in the person of his brother and heir Henry, second son of Edmond Crouchback. Henry

CHAP. I. like Thomas had rebelled against Edward II., but he found favour with the weak monarch's son and successor. At the proclamation of Edward III. he girded the young king with the sword of knighthood, and was subsequently intrusted with the care of his education. In the first parliament Henry obtained an act for the reversal of the attainder of his brother, whereby he became repossessed of the confiscated estates; and in addition to the splendid patrimony of his family inherited the lands of Alice Lacy, widow of the late earl, who though twice married after the death of Thomas Lancaster descended childless to the grave.

Under the victorious reign of Edward III. there sprung an illustrious scion of this royal house, well worthy of the grandeur of his descent: Henry, surnamed Grismond from the place of his birth, succeeded his father the third earl in 1345.

A valiant commander in the wars of France, this distinguished nobleman assisted at the capture of fifty-six cities, towns and places of note. In the early part of his life he was invested by the king's munificence with certain lands at Berwick-upon-Tweed. He amassed a large quantity of gold and other treasure during his campaigns; and for his eminent services was created Duke of Lancaster, and received grants of land in Derbyshire and in France in consideration of his great expences incurred in the support of his sovereign's enterprize. He died of the plague in 1361 justly lamented by the whole nation; from which his virtues had obtained for him the title of "the good Duke of Lancaster."

By Henry's consort Isabella daughter of Lord Beaumont, he left two daughters co-heiresses; Maude, first married to Ralph son and heir of Lord Stafford; and secondly to William of Bavaria, son of the Emperor Louis; and Blanche married to John of Ghent, fourth son of Edward III. CHAP. I.

The decease of Maude without issue again concentrated the immense possessions of the house of Lancaster, and the husband of Blanche became the sole claimant of the honours, titles and estates. The favourite son of Edward III. proud, ambitious, covetous, disdainful of all beneath him and imperious in his manners, the dark shades in the character of "time-honoured" Lancaster were relieved by many brilliant virtues. The duke's caution and prudence combined with the affection which he bore to his misguided nephew Richard II., who had been early taught to consider him as a secret and dangerous enemy, preserved him in undeviating loyalty throughout a reign wherein he saw himself deprived of the share of power and authority, so justly due to his talents and his rank as prince of the blood; and strongly tempted as he was by repeated insults, by universal distrust and by the consciousness of his own amazing resources, to seize a crown which was very generally supposed to be the object of his hopes and wishes, he lived and died faithful to the oath of allegiance which he voluntarily tendered to the infant sovereign upon his accession to the throne.

Trained to arms in the school of his martial and accomplished father, we first hear of a command intrusted to John of Ghent in the Spanish cam-

CHAP. I. paign, undertaken by the victor of Crecy and Poictiers, for the purpose of replacing Pedro the Cruel on the throne of Castille. At the battle of Navarete, under the conduct of the gallant Sir John Chandos, a brave knight who had directed the movements of the Black Prince in his youthful career of glory, he approved himself worthy of his kindred to the heroic Edwards behaving as Froissart tells us, "very gallantly." Justly exiled for his tyranny, the restoration of Pedro against the wishes of his groaning subjects was only effected by foreign arms, and the departure of his allies proved the signal for new convulsions in which the despot lost his crown and life. The monarch's daughters, who had fled in the commencement of the troubles from Seville to Bayonne, were now the lawful heiresses of the kingdom of Castille, usurped by Henry of Transtamerre; and the Duke of Lancaster being a widower, was prompted by the hope of ascending a throne to offer his hand to the eldest of the princesses: his brother Edmund of Langley, afterwards Duke of York, was married nearly at the same time to the younger sister Isabella of Castille. The naturally haughty disposition of the Duke of Lancaster was heightened by the splendour of this alliance, he assumed the title of King of Castille and on his return to England, the undisguised partiality of the king Edward III. who admitted this beloved son to the highest share in the councils, awakened the jealousy of the Black Prince, recalled from his campaign in Aquitaine by declining health. The last years of the ill-fated hero's life were spent in vain contentions with the

triumphant John of Ghent, and in terror lest his young son should be deprived of his inheritance by the projects of a too powerful adversary. CHAP. I.

The conduct of the Duke of Lancaster was certainly calculated to raise these suspicions; even in the prosecution of just measures he displayed an overbearing and vindictive spirit which rendered him an object of hatred to the common people: he imprisoned those members of the House of Commons who dared to oppose his wishes, and disdaining to court popularity shewed himself at all times an inexorable enemy to the citizens of London, whose turbulence excited his resentment and brought down the full weight of his vengeance on the innocent as well as on the guilty. The excessive licentiousness which pervaded all ranks, the contempt of law and morality displayed by soldiers inured to rapine and carnage and let loose upon society from the wars in France, and the ready imitation of such models by their associates required a strong hand to guide the reins of government; but the Duke of Lancaster often overstepped the bounds of justice in the arbitrary exertion of his power. The wholesome rigours of the law were too slow in their operation to gratify his thirst for revenge, and his manner of preserving the peace though generally successful, was not at all compatible with the liberties of the subject; managing to rule all things his own way as Holingshed tells us by a "huge rout of retainers," who terrified the seditious into submission. John of Ghent embroiled himself with the prelacy by his persecution of William of Wyckham Bishop of Winchester, who was for a short period deprived of his 1337.

CHAP. I. temporalities, and the open favour which he shewed to Wickliffe seemed a sufficient proof of his enmity to the Church of Rome. Whilst honouring the friendly zeal which the duke displayed in defending the Reformer from the malice of his enemies, it must be admitted that his intemperate demeanour towards the reverend assembly who had cited Wickliffe to appear before them was exceedingly unjustifiable.

The patronage and support granted by the Duke of Lancaster and Lord Henry Percy (Earl Mareschal) to that enlightened preacher had enabled him to promulgate his opinions with little personal danger; but the clergy being at length scandalized and incensed at the boldness of his doctrine urged their archbishop to summon him to answer in person to the charges preferred against him.* Wickliffe made his appearance at St. Paul's accompanied by his two powerful friends and their usual retinue of armed followers: the church was already filled by a curious multitude eager to learn the result of the meeting, and the arrival of so large a train occasioned great inconvenience. It was with considerable difficulty that the duke and his people could make their way through the throng though they were little scrupulous respecting the means; and the Bishop of London, justly enraged to see the tumult which the struggle produced, said to the Lord Percy, "that if he had known before what mastry he would have kept in the church he would have stopped him out from coming there;" at which words of the bishop the duke disdaining not a little answered to the bishop again, and said "that he should keep such

* Walsingham.

mastry there, though he said nay." At last, as our chronicler informs us, "with much *wrestling* they *pierced* through the crowd," and approached the place where the bishops and barons of the realm were assembled: the Lord Percy gave the signal for hostilities by desiring Wickliffe to sit in the presence of his accusers: the Bishop of London resented the proposition and immediately a fierce contest commenced between him and the Duke of Lancaster. The latter threatened that he would pull down the pride not only of him but also of all the prelacy of England; and the bishop answering boldly to this menace, the duke enraged beyond all bounds of decency said to the Lord Percy loud enough to be overheard by the bystanders, "that he would rather pluck the bishop by the hair of his head out of the church than he would take this at his hand."*

The people, provoked by the indignity offered to their revered prelate exclaimed, "that they would not suffer their bishop so contemptuously to be abused, but rather they would lose their lives than that he should so be drawn out by the hair:" whereupon great strife ensuing the meeting was broken up in confusion and disorder.

The rage of the populace of London against the Duke of Lancaster increased to fury by his injurious treatment of their bishop, burst forth the next day with unconquerable violence. The common people refusing to listen to the city magistrates rose in a body, and rushing to the Marshalsea the residence of the Lord Percy wreaked their vengeance on the

* Fox.

CHAP. I. building which they speedily demolished. Disappointed by the absence of the Earl Mareschal whom they would have sacrificed on the spot, they hastened onwards to the Savoy the palace of John of Ghent, where they hoped to find both the objects of their hatred; but the duke and the earl were dining together at the house of a friend, and news being brought to them of their danger they escaped hastily by water to Kingston. The insurgents killed a priest who had incautiously expressed opinions differing widely from those entertained by the mob; and having accomplished all the mischief in their power upon the furniture and decorations of the palace, they reversed the duke's arms as those of a traitor, and scrawled libellous rhymes upon the walls. These outrages were stayed by the interference of the Bishop of London who hastened from his dinner to preach peace to the rioters, and to persuade them to return quietly to their own homes. The mayor and the aldermen dreading the consequences of this tumult essayed to sooth the wrath of the Duke of Lancaster by very humble submissions, but he was not to be appeased; and as their authority, if exerted, had certainly proved insufficient to preserve tranquillity, he dismissed them from all their offices, and immediately appointed his own dependents to the posts which he had obliged them to vacate.

This new proof of John of Ghent's implacable disposition and lust of power filled the public mind with apprehension; the nation feared that on the expected dissolution of the king he would dispute the crown with the son of their idol the Black

Prince, who claimed it by a right, that of represen- CHAP. I.
tation,* not yet fully established in England. The Princess Joan mother of Richard of Bourdeaux, participated in the general alarm. A lady of extraordinary beauty and amiable manners, but not distinguished for splendid abilities she unhappily imbibed the general feeling against the Duke of Lancaster, and her jealousy became the occasion of fatal misfortune to her son. The errors of Richard's reign and its miserable termination, must be attributed to the weakness of his early counsellors, men of no weight in the kingdom and of slender capacity, who were placed about his person by the suspicions of his mother and the parliament to the prejudice of John of Ghent: a prince who though too much disdaining the conciliatory methods which would have established his popularity was, by his vigour, talent and experience, admirably calculated to govern the turbulent spirits of the age.

Edward's health was now declining; and during June 21 1377.
his last illness a deputation of the citizens repaired to Shene, to offer their lives and fortunes in support of the youthful Richard's claim, and to solicit the friendly offices of the latter towards a reconciliation with the Duke of Lancaster. Richard, as we must suppose according to his instructions for he was only eleven years old, received the embassy very

* The young prince could claim the crown only by right of representation, of which there had been no precedent, at least with respect to the crown, since the Norman conquest.—*Rapin.*

The apprehension which John of Ghent's ambitious temper excited induced the commons to petition King Edward on the death of the Black Prince, to make a public declaration in favour of his grandson Richard of Bourdeaux.

CHAP. I. graciously, and readily promised to become a mediator between the petitioners and his enraged uncle.

Edward III. survived his three eldest sons; two of them, the Black Prince and Lionel Duke of Clarence, left offspring. William, the second son died an infant; and John of Ghent the fourth in the descent saw himself opposed by two children, Richard of Bourdeaux and the son of Philippa, daughter of the Duke of Clarence, married to the Earl of March. The people remembering the usurpation of John and the melancholy fate of Arthur, Duke of Bretagne, were apprehensive that the Duke of Lancaster would imitate that fatal precedent, and like the tyrant whose memory was so justly execrated would trample on the rights of his deceased brother; but though John of Ghent and his descendants viewed the claims of the Mortimers Earls of March with contempt, it does not appear that this ambitious prince ever entertained a hope of snatching the crown from "the immediate heir of England." Edward III. left two sons younger than John of Ghent, Edward of Langley Earl of Cambridge, and Thomas of Woodstock Earl of Buckingham. Immediately upon the decease of the king, John of Ghent to the surprise of his enemies voluntarily tendered his allegiance to his nephew, and the coronation of the new monarch Richard II. followed closely upon the funeral obsequies of his illustrious grandfather. Upon this occasion as well as at the proclamation of the young heir the Duke of Lancaster conducted himself with unwonted moderation, and together with the Earl Mareschal studied to regain the confidence of the people by the suavity

July 16.

of his demeanour; but his sincerity was deeply suspected, and it appeared to be the aim of all ranks and classes of the kingdom to exclude him from every office of power and authority. CHAP. I.

A grand council composed of the barons and prelates of the realm refused to constitute the Duke of Lancaster sole regent, the supposed object of his wishes, and appointed "twelve permanent counsellors, in aid of the chancellor and treasurer," to direct the reins of government during the minority of the king. Edmund of Langley Earl of Cambridge, and Thomas of Woodstock Earl of Buckingham, the younger brothers of John of Ghent, were also not named in the administration; but the former was a man of mean abilities more devoted to his private pleasures than desirous to obtain political importance, and the latter had not as yet acquired any influence in the state, though all three were probably suspected of ill designs against the boy king; and it was the policy of the times to surround Richard with strangers to his blood, people who could only build their own hopes of aggrandizement upon the alienation of his uncles from his heart and councils. The Duke of Lancaster, contrary to general expectation cheerfully submitted to the decision of the assembled barons, and retired to his castle of Kenilworth, leaving however the care of his interests in the hands of his friends, for whom he had contrived to procure places in the council, and whose appointment increased the mistrust which the opposite faction already entertained. July 17.

The bitter fruits of Edward's foreign wars were bequeathed to his successor in an exhausted treasury,

CHAP. I. a mercenary licentious soldiery insatiate of pillage; and hostility with Scotland, France, and Spain. The utmost prudence and vigour was necessary to ensure an honourable peace, or to carry on a war worthy of the victorious arms of England; yet little was attempted and nothing done, to place the affairs of the kingdom in a more flourishing condition. The fatal jealousy which had deprived the king of the Duke of Lancaster's assistance was superadded to this disastrous state of things; for a continual succession of slanderous reports kept every injurious suspicion alive against the latter, he was accused of meditating a design to make himself master of the kingdom, and in the meantime one weak administration was succeeded by another equally imbecile. The nation groaned under a weight of taxes which at last was found to be inadequate to its defence; the towns on the sea-coast were plundered with impunity by the fleets of the enemy, and the consequent decay of commerce contributed to impoverish the country.

The necessity of adopting effective and vigorous measures was obvious, and the Archbishop of Canterbury in opening the first parliament held under the young king, directed the attention of the commons to the situation of the kingdom, and requested their advice respecting the means to be employed for the protection of the country against foreign inroad without compromising the dignity of the sovereign or distressing the people by heavy impositions. The commons, though for the most part the personal enemies of John of Ghent, being principally composed of members who had formerly acted in direct opposition to him, and headed by their

Oct. 13, 1377.

speaker Sir Peter de la Marc who had been imprisoned by the Duke, declined in these difficult circumstances to give an opinion, and requested the aid of "My Lord of Spain, and twelve peers," in discussing so important a question.* John of Ghent instantly seized the opportunity to repel the slanders which were industriously disseminated by the very persons who now claimed his assistance. He arose and bending his knee to the king, declared that he would not endure the imputations which had been cast upon him, or apply to any business with men who had charged him with guilt which amounted to treason, until his character should be cleared from the calumnious aspersions in circulation to his dishonour. The duke concluded an eloquent and impassioned speech with protestations of unshaken loyalty affirming that he was ready to meet the [illegible] who *accused him of traitorous intentions* as if he were the poorest knight, either in single combat, or in any other way that the king and his peers might award. The whole assembly concurred in entreating the duke to rest satisfied with their entire confidence in his integrity; and pacified at length he consented to forget the past upon condition that a severe law should be enacted for the punishment of the inventors and propagators of similar falsehoods. But that law, if ever granted, was speedily set at defiance; reports to the prejudice of the duke being stronger and more credited than ever. That the public voice should have been against this haughty prince is not surprising, since he never allowed himself to be

CHAP. I.

* Parl. Rolls, 111.

CHAP. I. restrained by a sense of justice from the commission of any act, however violent and illegal, which promised to forward his private views; and yet that these views were mistaken by the world there can be no doubt. In aspiring to the regal dignity the duke only sought the crown of Castille; he disregarded the interests of England in the prosecution of his ambitious designs, by adding to the multitude of its enemies the kingdom he desired to conquer: but prevented from being of any effectual service at home by the fears or the policy of Richard's friends, it was perhaps too much to expect from his patriotism, that he should sacrifice his foreign project for the welfare of a nation so ready to misrepresent his actions and to distrust his sincerity. Yet the following story tells so much to the discredit of John of Ghent, that we cannot be surprised at the popular clamour which the transaction it reports created; and it is still farther interesting, as not only developing the character of the Duke of Lancaster, but as it tends to illustrate the spirit of the age, the whimsical, yet melancholy contrast of lawless oppression and chivalric honour which were the leading features in the conduct of knights and nobles, and were not unfrequently combined in the same person. John of Ghent, eagerly desirous to strengthen his interest in Castille, procured an order from the king for the delivery of the son of the Earl of Denia into his hands, a noble Spaniard, taken in the late campaign by two English gentlemen, and detained by them according to the custom of war until they should receive the stipulated amount of his ransom.*

1378.

* Daniell's History.

The captors resisted the duke's demand as unjust, and took refuge in the sanctuary of Westminster, trusting to the privileges of the place for security against farther persecution; but this precaution availed not against the Duke of Lancaster: a band of soldiers headed by two gentlemen in the duke's service entered the church, and endeavoured to drag the fugitives from their retreat: the knights, assisted by their servants and the monks, stood upon their defence; one of the assailed persons fell in the skirmish, and the scandal raised by a murder thus sacrilegiously perpetrated at the foot of the altar, compelled the king whose name had been employed to sanction the outrage to abandon the odious means which had led to this catastrophe, and to treat with the survivor for the ransom of his prisoner. The terms being arranged, the Spaniard appeared in the garb of a menial; a disguise which his principles of chivalric conscientiousness had induced him to assume, in order that he might remain concealed from the agents employed to force him from his captors, whose right to the benefit of his ransom he had thus religiously maintained. CHAP. I.

The ill success of an expedition to Bretagne commanded by the Duke of Lancaster at this period reduced him still lower in public estimation. Though not destitute of military talents, the duke was unfortunate in his continental wars. It would be tedious and unnecessary to enumerate all the circumstances which crippled the arms of England, during a contest wherein fortune had so long declared herself favourable to the enemy. Edward's conquests had disappeared like a dream, and it required the spirit, 1398.

CHAP. I. the influence, and the resources of that enterprising monarch to regain any approximation to the ascendance which he had once possessed in France.

Experience had taught the French to avoid general engagements in which they usually sustained defeat. It was now their policy to suffer their invaders to traverse the country without opposition, and when the hostile troops were wasted by the hardships which they encountered, in weary marches and scanty fare, to hang upon their retreat, and oblige them to quit the kingdom reduced in numbers, and unsignalized by any action of importance.

The Scots in the meantime harassed the English border, which was valiantly defended by young Hotspur, the son of the Earl of Northumberland, who commenced his career in arms with a promise of the glorious immortality in after years so proudly linked with the name of Henry Percy.

Upon the return of the Duke of Lancaster from Bretagne he was employed to negotiate a truce with Scotland; his younger brother the Earl of Buckingham had succeeded him in France, and he had dispatched the Earl of Cambridge to the assistance of the King of Portugal, whose friendship and alliance his designs upon Castille rendered him very desirous to cultivate.

The absence of the king's uncle at this juncture from the seat of government was particularly unfortunate; the men who had been appointed by parliament for the guardians and advisers of the young monarch, were unequal to the trust; and the only person in the kingdom who could have maintained the authority of the sovereign against the dangers

which surrounded him, had the singular ill-fortune to be denied the regency by the suspicions of the nobles, and to be charged by the common people with the blame of every unpalatable measure emanating from the crown, which they supposed to be entirely under his controul. A spirit of insubordination had manifested itself amongst the lower orders, which the grievous and tyrannical manner of levying an odious tax ripened to open rebellion. Urged to assert their rights by the preaching of dissatisfied priests, oppressed by heavy burthens, and goaded by the brutal insolence of petty tyrants, the commons of Kent, headed by a daring individual, called from his trade, Wat Tyler, took up arms in defence of their liberties; and the flame spreading with fearful rapidity the population of Essex crowded to the standard of the Kentish leader, whose numbers by this formidable reinforcement were increased to a hundred thousand men.* CHAP. I. 1381

The first act of the insurgents affords a strong instance of the feeling which upon this occasion pervaded the mass of the disaffected. They assembled in great force on the road to Canterbury, and arresting all passengers and travellers, obliged them to take an oath of allegiance to King Richard, and to the commons, and to swear never to receive any king who should be named John; "and this," says Holingshed, "was the envy which they bore to the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt." The torrent, gaining fresh strength as it swept along, rushed onwards with overpowering force to London. Panic struck, and unable to withstand the popular fury, the king's

* Walsingham.

CHAP. I. ministers yielded to the tumultuous rabble, not even attempting to defend the Tower though garrisoned by an adequate force; and thus abandoned by their fears to the vengeance of an incensed enemy, seven persons the most offensive to the rebel crew, including the chancellor, the treasurer, and the farmer of the tax, were seized without resistance and dragged to immediate execution.

The Duke of Lancaster's splendid palace in the Savoy, fell a sacrifice to the hatred of the populace; the work of destruction was performed with such zeal and celerity, that scarcely a vestige was left of its previous magnificence. The duke's massy plate was hammered and cut into pieces, and the precious stones ground to powder and mingled with the dust; as revenge, and not plunder, was the motive for this and for similar outrages. A proclamation was issued by the insurgents, forbidding their followers to enrich themselves with property condemned to wanton demolition; and the new lawgivers were so tenacious of their authority that they punished with the loss of life a confederate too strongly allured by the view of the riches of the palace to resist the temptation of appropriating a part: the offender was thrown into the Thames together with a silver cup which he was observed to secrete in his bosom.*

The triumphant rioters burnt the Temple with the library and records; beheaded every individual whom they encountered unprepared with a satisfactory answer to the question, "With whom holdest thou?" If the prompt reply, "With King Richard and the commons,"† did not immediately satisfy the

* Stow. † Walsingham.

inquirer, instant execution followed, and deeply imbued with the vulgar intolerance of foreigners the sanguinary mob dragged sixty-two unfortunate Flemings from the different churches to which they had vainly fled for refuge, and struck off their heads amid shouts of exultation. CHAP. I.

This frightful scene of disorder lasted three days, without any attempt to repress it on the part of the government except by ineffectual negociations. Even those who possessed sufficient courage to repel the insolence of Tyler and his adherents were so totally devoid of judgment that they precipitated their sovereign to the very brink of ruin; and nothing save the undaunted courage and extraordinary presence of mind displayed by the boy king, could have extricated him from the dangerous situation in which he was placed by the rash valour of William Walworth the mayor. Richard had twice endeavoured to make terms in person with the insurgents; on the twelfth of June he went down the river to meet them,* but was compelled to retreat by the alarm of his attendants. The next day he issued, unarmed from the Tower, and held a conference with the most amicable of the malcontents, which, but for the ambition of their turbulent leader might have been productive of the most happy events. On the fifteenth of June,† the king, riding through Smithfield attended by sixty horsemen, encountered Tyler at the head of sixty thousand rebels. Three different charters had been previously submitted to this insolent reformer and rejected by him with contempt.‡ On perceiving the royal party, the

June 12, 13, 14.

1381.

* Froissart. † Walsingham. ‡ Knyghton.

CHAP. I. Kentish leader commanded his followers to halt, and boldly rode up to the king whom he addressed with his usual confidence. The extravagance of the rebel's demands occasioned some hesitation; and, whilst Richard held a short debate with his friends on the expediency of granting or refusing his proposals, Tyler affected to play with his dagger, tossing it from hand to hand; and, whether through the ambition of appearing on an equality with a crowned head, or with a more mischievous design, laid his hand upon the bridle of his sovereign's horse. The indignation of Walworth at this insult, too powerful to be subdued urged him to the commission of an
June 15. act of unparalleled rashness; he buried his sword in the rebel's throat, and struck him dead to the ground with the blow. The astonished host who were witnesses of this transaction, and now saw their leader fall, instantly drew their bows to avenge his death; and Richard, in this imminent peril was only preserved by the unconquerable gallantry of his spirit. Spurring his horse, he galloped up to the insurgents, exclaiming, "What are ye doing, my lieges? Grieve not for the death of the traitor Tyler; I will be your king, captain, and leader!" and putting himself wholly into their power he adroitly drew them towards the fields, where, disconcerted and incapable of farther effort, with no opportunity of increasing their numbers, they remained, until a thousand armed men collected in haste by the mayor came to the assistance of the king. The rebels, terrified by the appearance of the royal troops, threw themselves upon their knees and begged for mercy, which Richard graciously accorded: and to

his infinite honour refused to revoke the pardon thus granted, when urged by his friends for leave to punish the excesses committed by the misguided men who had so happily failed in their dangerous attempt. CHAP. I.

The universal outcry had increased against the Duke of Lancaster during the rebellion; rumour magnified the excesses which had been committed on his property. He was informed that his castles of Leicester and Tutbury had been pillaged, and that two bodies of ten thousand men each were lying in wait to intercept his return. Other reports stated that the king had sanctioned the proceedings of his uncle's enemies, and had availed himself of the public commotions to effect his ruin. These assertions were devoid of truth; but they induced his officers at Pomfret to refuse admittance to the Duchess of Lancaster; and John of Ghent found the gates of Bamborough castle shut upon him by his old ally the Earl of Northumberland. Alarmed by these hostile movements he deemed it prudent to withdraw into Scotland, where he remained until the king invited him to return by issuing a proclamation couched in terms most honourable to his character, and authorizing him to travel with a body guard for the security of his person. But the insult which he had received rankled deeply in his heart; he expostulated warmly with the Earl of Northumberland on the part which he had taken against him in the presence of the king and court, exclaiming, "Harry Percy, I did not think you were so great a man in England, that you would dare to order any cities, towns, or castles, to be shut against the Duke of

CHAP. I. Lancaster." The earl respectfully answered, "My lord, I do not deny the knights' act at Berwick; but I was ordered by the strict command of King Richard, who sits there, on my honour, and under pain of death, not to suffer any one, lord or otherwise, to enter the cities, towns, or castles of Northumberland, if he were not an inhabitant of those places: and the king, if he pleases, or the lords of the council, may make my excuses; for they well knew you were in Scotland, and you ought to have been excepted out of their orders." "How! Earl of Northumberland," replied the duke, "do you think there should have been a reservation in regard to me? who am uncle to the king, and who have my inheritance to guard; which, next to the king's, is the greatest; and who, for the good will of the realm, have made the journey to Scotland?—Your answer does not excuse you from having much wronged my honour, in thus giving credit to the reports in circulation, that I wished to commit treason with the Scots, by shutting against me the king my lord's town, and in particular that in which my provisions and stores were; for which reasons, I tell you, you have ill-behaved; and for the blame you have thus cast on me, and to clear myself, in the presence of my lord the king, I throw down my glove; take it up if you dare." Richard now interposed, and, taking the blame upon himself imputed the omission of his uncle's name as an exception to the general order to the peril and confusion of the times. But it was difficult to appease the duke's wrath, and it was not until the Earls of Salisbury, Suffolk, Stafford, and Devonshire, had cast themselves on their knees

before him, that he consented to withdraw his challenge, and overlook the affront. CHAP. I.

Froissart, from whose interesting Chronicles the above record of the Duke of Lancaster's feelings is extracted, informs us, that the king having arrived at a marriageable age various ladies were proposed to him, and among others, a daughter of his uncle John of Ghent, by his first wife, the Lady Blanche of Lancaster. The duke was desirous that this union should take place; but the consanguinity of the parties, and the advantages which would accrue from a foreign alliance, were objected to a match which we may easily imagine would be violently opposed by the duke's numerous enemies, and little desired by the king, who was in continual dread of being subjected to his kinsman's controul. Anne of Bohemia, sister of the Emperor Wenceslaus, became the consort of Richard; a princess of great beauty and accomplishments, and styled, from the active virtues of her heart, "Good Queen Anne."

CHAPTER II.

Truce with France and Scotland—Infractions of the latter—The Duke of Lancaster's Expedition—Accusations of a Carmelite Friar—Outrage committed by Sir John Holand—Violent conduct of the Earl of Buckingham—Character of the King—Employment of John of Ghent in France—New attempts of his Enemies—Interference of the Princess Joan—Sir John Holand received into favour—War with Scotland—Sir John Holand's second Outrage—Anxious entreaties of the Princess Joan—her death—Opposition to the Duke of Lancaster—The King's unpopularity—Exaltation of the Nobles—Envy of the Favourites—The Duke of Lancaster's designs upon Castille—Confederacy of the Nobles—Charge against the Chancellor—Intimidation of the King—Naval Exploit—Richard's progresses—Consultation with the Judges—The King's hopes—their defeat—Proceedings of the Confederates—Appeals of treason—Flight of Richard's friends—The Duke of Gloucester's ambitious designs—Advance of the Duke of Ireland—The Defeat at Radcot Bridge—Vindictive proceedings of the Council—Charge against the Favourites—Their Execution—Gloucester's Administration—Dismissal of the Council.

CHAP. II. 1384.

THE war in France being still unfortunate the Duke of Lancaster concluded an armistice with that country in which Scotland was comprehended; but the articles of the truce being very ill observed by the latter, the duke marched with an army across the border, and effectually crippled the enemy by burning the villages and destroying the forests which had

hitherto sheltered the retreating marauders from the pursuit of the English.

Soon after the duke had performed this service for the state he was again assailed by calumny. During the meeting of a parliament held at Salisbury, a Carmelite friar presented a written paper to the king, containing the particulars of a conspiracy, alleged to have been formed for the purpose of placing the crown upon his uncle's head. Richard, by the advice of his friends made the duke acquainted with this accusation, who swore that it was false, offered to trust his innocence to the hazard of battle, and required that the ecclesiastic should be secured for future examination. The friar unintimidated continued to assert the truth of his story, and was committed to the care of Sir John Holand the king's uterine brother, a knight renowned for his chivalric exploits, and infamous for his cold-blooded assassinations. He abused the trust reposed in him, tortured his unfortunate prisoner with monstrous and unheard-of cruelties to force him to confession; and being disappointed in his purpose, strangled him with his own hands during the night, and caused his body to be dragged through the streets branded with the name of traitor.

This inhuman murder was not calculated to remove the suspicions against the duke, but only, on the contrary, served to involve the whole affair in unfathomable mystery. The Lord Zouch, whom the friar had named as the author of the scroll which charged the Duke of Lancaster with traitorous designs against his nephew, denied, upon oath, all knowledge of its existence; and testimony of a more

CHAP. II. dubious nature was given by the Earl of Buckingham, who burst into the presence of the king with his sword drawn, swearing that he would murder the first man who should accuse his brother of treason.* The ferocity of Thomas of Woodstock, thus boldly displayed, could not fail to make a strong impression upon Richard's mind.

The king had advanced at least two centuries in refinement beyond the age in which it was his misfortune to live. Secluded from early association with his warlike uncles by the too anxious tenderness of his mother, he had imbibed from the apparently harmless companions with which he was surrounded a taste for "dances, carollings," and other elegant amusements, which, instead of enjoying as a relaxation from the more laborious pleasures of the chase and the tourney, were the exclusive objects of his pursuit.† The native valour of his ancestors flashed out in Smithfield at the call of danger; but he rarely exposed his person in the perilous sport of the tilt, remaining a passive spectator of the exploits of others and delighting in the magnificence rather than in the exercise of the hardy pastimes of his court. The contrast of his character with those of his kinsmen will be developed in the course of this history, in which events press so rapidly upon each other, that at present there is little space for the more entertaining description of manners.

Though the subsequent conduct of John of Ghent affords strong evidence of his innocence of the plot imputed to him by the Carmelite friar, yet the inhuman murder committed upon that accuser, and the

* Walsingham. † Froissart.

intemperate interference of the Earl of Buckingham, occasioned well-grounded suspicions at the time. He was however employed in France to obtain a prolongation of the armistice; and during his absence the council resolved upon his arrest. Gaining intelligence of this design he eluded the vigilance of his enemies, and entrenched himself in his strong castle of Pomfret, or Pontefract, where he made preparations for an open war. The king's mother, always in terror of the Duke of Lancaster and aware of the danger attending a disunion between the sovereign and so powerful a subject, offered her services as a mediator between them; and though she was of a delicate and tender habit and so corpulent that she could scarcely support herself, journeyed north and south from one to the other until her earnest entreaties procured a reconciliation, which was sealed by a full pardon for her elder son Sir John Holand, under merited disgrace for the late atrocious violence committed on the person of his prisoner.* CHAP. II. May.

The truce with France and Scotland being ended, England was threatened with an invasion by the combined forces of both countries. The Scots were strengthened by a thousand men at arms sent to their aid by the government of France, and Richard putting himself at the head of an army eighty thousand strong advanced with his uncle John of Ghent to meet the enemy. At York where the royal troops rested on their march, Sir John Holand again disgraced the knightly character by dipping his hands in the blood of assassination. One of his esquires had been killed in a brawl by an archer July, 1385.

* Rymer.

CHAP. II. belonging to the Earl of Stafford. We are told that when he heard of his servant's death he was like a madman, exclaiming that he would neither eat nor drink until he had avenged it.* In this mood he unfortunately encountered the son of Lord Stafford, a gentleman of great promise, and inflamed by the sight of the livery he wore sacrificed him on the spot; and when informed of his victim's name and title answered with his usual wanton ferocity, "Be it so! I had rather put him to death than one of less rank; for by that I have better avenged the loss of my squire." The unhappy father called loudly for justice on the murderer, whilst the Princess Joan as anxiously besought her son to shew mercy on his brother. But the king, still remembering the death of the friar, repelled her entreaties with unwonted sternness declaring that he would hang the offender if he ever dared to leave the sanctuary of St. John of Beverly; and the distracted mother unable to survive a sentence which threatened to deprive her of a son, so unworthy yet so beloved, pined for a few days and died of a broken heart. Softened perhaps by this fatal catastrophe, or incapable of cherishing resentment against a brother who had previously shared his affection, Richard when too late to save the life of his mother granted a pardon to his guilty relative.

Aug. 1. The English enterprize against Scotland commenced with a promise of complete success; but it failed through the unabated violence of those malignant aspersions cast upon the calumniated Duke of Lancaster. Richard had advanced as far as Aber-

* Froissart.

deen, reducing the intermediate towns with one exception* to ashes in his progress; when advice was received that the Scots, though neglecting the defence of their own country, were making reprisals by carrying fire and sword into the unprotected counties upon the frontier of England. The Duke of Lancaster proposed to march back to the border by a different route from that which the king's forces had pursued in their approach, and to intercept the enemy upon their return. This measure was at first approved; but during the ensuing night the king's favourites contrived to poison the mind of their sovereign, so that the next morning Richard turned angrily away from his uncle, saying, "You, Sir, may go with your men where you please: I with mine shall return to England, and all those who love me will follow me." "Then I shall follow you," replied the duke, "for there is not a man in your company who loves you so well as I and my brothers; and if any one but yourself dare advance the contrary I am ready to throw him my glove."† The king and his courtiers remained silent but steady in their determination to return home; and the martial duke had the mortification to witness the disappointment of England's hope, in the abandonment of a campaign which he trusted would have completely disabled the enemy. Pursuing a line of conduct which as far as it regarded the king was invariably calculated to produce confidence, he acquiesced in

CHAP. II.

Aug. 30.

* Edinburgh would have been consigned to the flames, like Stirling, but for the gratitude of Duke John, who led the English, and who could not forget the kind reception he had met there when in adversity.—*Buchanan.*

† Froissart.

CHAP. II. Richard's determination and relinquished all farther efforts to carry on the war.

The youthful monarch had already injured himself in the estimation of his people. The pacific disposition which he displayed was not congenial to the sanguinary spirit of the times; and a deeper cause of disgust existed in the king's unbounded prodigality. The treasure spent by Edward III. for the prosecution of a war however unjust and unnecessary, administered to the gratification of national pride, and Englishmen have seldom thought that laurels could be purchased at too high a price; but they looked with an evil eye on the wealth which was lavished upon favourites, who if they were undeserving the bitter censure which was cast upon them, were at least not distinguished by any of those brilliant qualities which might have justified the monarch's excessive liberality. The marriage of the king with Anne, sister of the Emperor of Germany, though highly honourable occasioned new causes of discontent. The queen came to England accompanied by a numerous train of Bohemians; her beauty, virtue and grace secured the warm affections of her husband; and he gratified the princely munificence of his disposition by costly gifts to the strangers in her retinue. The jealousy of foreigners to which every nation is prone, rendered this unseasonable bounty extremely offensive to the English people, and loud murmurs were heard on every side.

Nov. 3. At the first parliament held after the Scottish campaign the king confirmed many promotions which he had bestowed during that expedition. He

exalted one of his uncles, Edmund of Langley Earl of Cambridge, to the dukedom of York, and another, Thomas of Woodstock, Earl of Buckingham, to that of Gloucester. Already the second person in the state the Duke of Lancaster could scarcely be invested with any new dignity short of the crown; wherefore Richard conferred the earldom of Derby on his son Henry of Bolingbroke, at the same time that with a view to check the aspiring hopes of his uncle of Lancaster, he declared Roger Mortimer Earl of March, grandson of Lionel Duke of Clarence third son of Edward III., the heir presumptive to the throne. The king also created Edward Plantagenet, son of the Duke of York, Earl of Rutland; and trusting that he had satisfied the princes of the blood, he proceeded to indulge his own inclination in the advancement of his favourites. He gave to Robert de Vere Earl of Oxford the title of Marquis of Dublin; and made Michael de la Pole Earl of Suffolk. But it was in vain to hope that the jealousy of an imperious baronage could be appeased by those dignities which they saw shared by men of birth inferior to their own. The ancient nobility called the Earl of Suffolk in scorn, Michael of the Pole;* and though De Vere traced his ancestry up to the Conquest he was held in nearly equal disdain.† The title of marquis, a novelty in England, was rendered odious by being bestowed upon a man so little esteemed; and as Speed observes, "it was among the infelicities of King CHAP. II.

* Speed.

† They grew in hate, as they did in honour, for many of ancient nobility did not stomach their undeserved advancement, and with these the votes of the people generally went.—*Lives of Roger Mortimer, Earl of Kent, and Robert Earl of Oxford.*

CHAP. II. Richard, that those times were too full of sour and impatient censors for a prince of so calm a temper and yet unseasoned years."

At this period the revival of the Duke of Lancaster's hope of obtaining the crown of Castille, induced him to conclude an alliance with the King of Portugal and to lead an army to his assistance; an event which was hailed in England with universal joy. The king, long taught to behold a dangerous rival in his uncle was happy to be relieved from his apprehensions; the favourites were equally delighted at the removal of a prince whom they feared and hated; and the commons who had always testified their dislike of the duke on this occasion granted him a liberal subsidy for the purpose of expediting his departure.* Nothing of splendour was omitted
1386. that could add honour to this armament. Richard presented his uncle with a crown of gold, and the queen made a similar gift to the duchess his consort. The daughters of John of Ghent by both his wives accompanied him with a suitable retinue; and Sir John Holand who had married Elizabeth the eldest was appointed constable. The duke left the care of his possessions in England to his son the Earl of Derby, who now first appeared on the political stage as an active coadjutor in the measures of his uncle the Duke of Gloucester.

The short-sighted policy of Lancaster's enemies was soon apparent in the fatal consequences, domestic and foreign, of his absence; and he who had been always regarded as the source of every danger apprehended either by king or commons was now discovered to have been always the common

* Parliament Rolls.

shield of both. Thomas of Woodstock, regarded with less suspicion, entertained far more offensive projects; restrained by the presence and authority of his elder brother he had not as yet betrayed the full extent of his self-willed passions and inordinate ambition; but the check removed, he took advantage of the defenceless state of the kingdom, its powerful foreign adversaries and its internal weakness, to wrest the whole power and authority from Richard's ministers, and to deprive his nephew of every thing save the title of a king. The absence of the army under the Duke of Lancaster offered to the French, burning with desire to avenge the disgraces which they had sustained in Edward's reign, a favourable opportunity for the invasion of England. Immense preparations were made by the enemy, whose forces in cavalry and infantry exceeded a hundred thousand men. The tidings of this alarming expedition were received in England with dismay; and though the national confidence was kept alive by a prompt and vigorous adoption of defensive measures, still the possible result of the intended invasion filled the public mind with apprehension; and the juncture seemed to be peculiarly fitted for the purposes of a faction who were excluded from the government, and who now sought to usurp the whole authority under a specious pretence of the necessity of their interference to restore the prosperity of the kingdom. The Duke of Gloucester had drawn four of the most potent barons of the realm, the Earls of Warwick, Arundel, Nottingham and Derby into his party; and the confederates proposed to themselves to

CHAP. II.

CHAP. II. establish a permanent council, similar to that which for a time overawed John, Henry III., and Edward II., whereby the king should be rendered merely a passive instrument in the hands of his nobles. The faction now charged the king's officers with enriching themselves with the public revenues, which became inadequate to meet the expenditure of the country, whilst the nation was impoverished by taxes, the poor compelled to abandon their farms from inability to pay their rents, and the higher classes in consequence deprived of a large portion of their incomes.* The extravagance of the royal household in some degree sanctioned the charge; but that the evil was not so grievous as it had been represented may be inferred from the voluntary remission on Richard's part during the preceding year, of a tenth and fifteenth which had been granted him in parliament. The king after a few ineffectual struggles to resist this formidable league, consented to the impeachment of the chancellor De la Pole, the sum of whose delinquencies if truly stated will serve to exemplify the spirit of his and of the king's enemies. "There was also," says Speed, "the Lord Chancellor De la Pole,† accused of, wee wot not what, petty crimes. As for paying to the king's coffers but twentie marks yearly for a fee farm, whereof himself received three score and ten." The accusations brought against this minister were

* Knyghton.

† The charges against Suffolk were slight; and chiefly turned on pecuniary aid which he had received from Richard. To these he had some claim, as his father (a rich merchant) had been ruined by lending money to Edward III.—*Cotton.*

very ably refuted: and though surrounded by so many enemies his judges were compelled to acquit him upon four charges; his answers to the remaining three were pronounced to be insufficient; and he was sentenced to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure, and to forfeit those sums mentioned in the indictment which it was contended had been illegally granted. CHAP. II.

The punishment assigned to the Earl of Suffolk's alleged offences is a proof that the evils of the administration had been greatly exaggerated, since the principal culprit had escaped from his persecutors with so mild a doom. The Duke of Gloucester and his associates however proceeded vigorously in the measures which they had concerted for the reformation of the state; they subdued the obstinacy of the king with threats, and on his declaration that he would dissolve the parliament, the commons reminded him of their power by sending for the statute which had deposed Edward II. Intimidated, and unequal to combat against this potent conspiracy, he was unwillingly induced to sign a commission which vested all the authority of the crown in the hands of eleven prelates and peers, for the purpose of inquiring into the conduct of the officers of the royal household and the examination and amendment of the abuses of the government. Richard nevertheless though too weak wholly to resist the usurpation of the nobles, yet was still able to refuse his sanction to the duration of this council for a period exceeding twelve months; and at the close of the session he openly and in person protested against the transactions of the parliament, as Nov. 19.

CHAP. II. affecting the prerogatives of the crown. The new administration though armed with extensive powers did not perform many actions worthy of record; and
1337. the chronicles of the time are silent respecting the redress of grievances and the discovery of abuses. Services more analogous to the pursuits of the age were rendered by the Earl of Arundel, who being appointed Admiral of the Fleet, obtained several splendid successes at sea and enriched the ports of England with an hundred and fifty sail of foreign vessels. The hostile movement contemplated by France was delayed from time to time and finally abandoned; and now it was that England relieved from the danger of a foreign invasion was threatened with the horrors of civil war.

Richard, desirous to escape from the personal controul of his council, passed the year of his humiliation in making progresses through the kingdom. He visited York and Chester; and in all places of his sojourn diligently sought to court popularity by graciously acceding to the petitions of his subjects. His friends, De Vere, (now raised to the title of Duke of Ireland,) De La Pole, and the Archbishop of York, were naturally anxious to re-instate him in the regal authority and to secure their own return to power; the unwarrantable means pursued by the Duke of Gloucester, to force the king into submission seemed to justify an appeal to arms, and having obtained at several consultations the opinion of the judges, who concurred in pronouncing the commission which superseded the king in the exercise of the royal authority, to be subversive of the constitution, and declared both the members who

moved for the statute of the deposition of Edward II., and he who brought it into the House, to be traitors, and also that the advisers and abettors of the late violent proceedings were liable to capital punishment; they invited the gentlemen and the burghers of the provincial towns in and near which the king resided, to repair to the court of their sovereign, and swear to hazard their lives in his defence. Richard's popular manners had secured the affections of the people, and none of his subjects thus convened, declined to take the oath of allegiance, or to wear the livery of him from whom they had so lately received so many manifestations of kindness.* Sir Nicholas Bramber an active magistrate in London, undertook to secure the co-operation of the citizens, and animated by the expectation of brilliant success the king prepared to return to his capital, which he reached on the tenth of November, nine days previous to the expiration of the commission; entering amid the acclamations of the populace, and greeted by the mayor and the principal citizens, who testified their respect by assuming his livery of white and crimson.

The Duke of Gloucester and his party however were too vigilant to permit themselves to be surprised by the measures of the young monarch and his feeble associates. They were accurately informed of all his councils;† one of the judges faithless to his oath, had already revealed the important secret with which he had been entrusted; and the confederates, aware of the proceedings intended to be employed against them, had with equal caution and dispatch

* Walsingham. † Knyghton.

CHAP. II. assembled a powerful army; and the king on the day after his arrival in London, found to his astonishment and dismay that he was surrounded on all sides by an armed force. The gratifying reception however which he had met with in the city, kept alive a hope of effectual resistance, in pursuit of
Nov. 12. which he issued a proclamation forbidding the supply of provisions or any other assistance to the troops in the neighbourhood. But upon the following day the Duke of Gloucester, together with the Earls of Arundel and Nottingham, advancing to Hackney at the head of forty thousand men, sent a letter* to the mayor and aldermen, clothed with assurances of respect and loyalty to the king, yet asserting their determination to deliver him from the thrall of evil counsellors, for which laudable service
Nov. 13. they demanded the aid of the municipal authorities under pain of severe penalties. The three lords commissioners were joined upon the following day by the Earls of Warwick and Derby, with reinforcements of soldiers; and now, Richard completely overpowered by numbers was obliged to grant them
Nov. 17. an audience. The king ascending his throne in Westminster Hall waited two hours, while the five lords affecting to be apprehensive of treachery refused to approach the palace until they had sent to search the houses in the Mews, in which it was rumoured a secret ambush had been placed to surprise and cut them off.† On their entrance into the royal presence the duke and his party assumed the outward appearance of respect, but after bending their knees in humble reverence and solemnly pro-

* Parliament Rolls. † Parliament Rolls.

testing their undeviating loyalty and unshaken attachment to the person of their sovereign, they appealed,* according to the phrase of the time, the king's chief favourites, namely, the Duke of Ireland, the Chancellor De la Pole, the Archbishop of York, Sir Robert Tresilian, Justice, and Sir Nicholas Bramber, Knt. of treason; and throwing their gauntlets on the floor each offered to prove the truth of his respective charge by single combat with the accused. Richard dissembling his grief and indignation conducted himself with the utmost courtesy towards these imperious nobles, and referring the decision of the cause to parliament assured them that justice should be inflexibly maintained. The king's friends now made aware that flight alone could save them, secretly withdrew from the scene of danger. Suffolk fled to the Continent; the Duke of Ireland to the borders of Wales; and the archbishop obtained shelter and concealment in the north. The king himself in the meantime still unwilling to submit without a struggle gave his sanction to De Vere to levy troops in his defence, promising to head them in person at the earliest opportunity. The duke full of hope raised the royal standard, and a strong body of Cheshire archers under Molyneux the constable instantly rallied round the royal colours. Gloucester eagerly watching for an excuse to cast off his allegiance ventured upon the

CHAP. II.

* The history and practice of "Appeals," both of treason and other crimes, under the ancient law of England, has been diligently explored, and amply illustrated in a work elicited by a recent judicial and parliamentary occasion, entitled, "An Argument for Construing largely the Right of an Appellee of Murder, to insist on Trial by Battle; and also for abolishing Appeals." By E. A. Kendall, Esq. F.S.A. 8vo. London, 1818.

CHAP. II. intelligence of this rising to sound the dispositions of his adherents, and following the example of Richard he inquired of the learned in the law, whether there were not circumstances which would release a vassal from the fealty and homage which he had sworn to his sovereign? and next proceeded
Dec. 10. at a meeting at Huntingdon to move the deposition of Richard, and the removal of the crown under his own custody.* The Earls of Arundel and Warwick, and the Lord Thomas Mortimer, approved of the design; but on this occasion the Earl of Derby, supported by the Earl of Nottingham, resolutely defended his kinsman's rights. The ambition of the house of Lancaster here fortunately interposed to defeat Gloucester's projected usurpation. Henry Bolingbroke would not submit to the exaltation of a younger branch of the Plantagenets, and had Richard been aware of his true interests he would have felt that the security of his throne depended upon the mutual jealousy of his uncle and his cousin, which must prevent both from obtaining the prize.

In the interim the Duke of Ireland was advancing with rapid marches upon London, but attempting to cross the Thames he was surprised and defeated
Dec. 20. 1337. at Radcot bridge by the Earl of Derby,† who in this victory over the favourite approved himself highly accomplished in the art of war. Surrounded on all sides, his retreat cut off by the Duke of Gloucester, and attacked in front by a superior force, De Vere relinquished his project without an effort,‡ and hastily dismounting from his horse

* Parliament Rolls. † Parliament Rolls. ‡ Knighton.

plunged into the river and swam to the opposite bank.* The darkness of the night and a report of his death favoured his escape. Molyneux the constable disdained either to surrender or to fly, and met a more honourable fate from the weapons of his adversaries. The king was now left wholly at the mercy of the council, and incapable of farther resistance he submitted entirely to their will. Rigorous in the execution of their authority every friend of the unfortunate monarch was immediately removed from his presence. Even his confessor was changed, his chief confidents to the number of eleven were apprehended and imprisoned, ten lords and knights and three ladies were banished from court, and a proclamation was issued for the arrest of the Duke of Ireland, the Archbishop of York, and the Earl of Suffolk, who had saved themselves by timely flight. CHAP. II.

It is painful to contemplate the scene of blood which followed. The parliament, at that time dignified by the name of the "wonder-working;" but since, more justly entitled, the "merciless," unanimously seconded the views of the Duke of Gloucester; and gratified him in the full measure of his revenge. The charges against the king's favourites were not confined to mal-administration: those persons were accused of striving to compass the death of the lords commissioners, and of other designs equally unfounded and absurd. It was not the custom of that, nor of many succeeding times, to allow a disgraced minister to escape with life, and the three principal culprits being beyond the Feb. 4. 1388.

* Walsingham.

CHAP. II. reach of their enemies they wreaked their vengeance upon Sir Robert Tresilian and Sir Nicholas Bramber; the former having been the chief instrument in obtaining the decision of the judges, and being also stigmatized as cruel and unjust in the execution of the duties of his office, was condemned
Feb. 19. and hurried to the scaffold without pity or regret. But the next victim, Sir Nicholas Bramber, an active magistrate who had preserved the peace of the city in times of civil tumult, was sacrificed to the hatred of his persecutors rather than for any infraction of the law. So difficult indeed was it to find charges against this loyal subject, that he was accused of things, "which," says Andrews, "were more ridiculous than criminal, such as wishing to change the name of London to Troy, and then to be created Duke of Troy." To possess the confidence and affection of the king was a crime considered worthy of death by the stern and flinty-hearted Duke of Gloucester. Not content with the blood of those who had already expiated their guilt upon a scaffold, nor with the total ruin of the fugitive lords, he determined to annihilate every friend that the evil fortunes of his nephew had left him in his adversity.

The lives of the judges who had signed the offensive declaration of the illegality of the measures pursued by the confederate lords, had been spared at the intercession of the bishop, and the milder doom of banishment to Ireland substituted for that of death. But this was a solitary act of mercy; four knights, the old and tried friends of the king, were impeached by the commons as

aiders and abettors of the condemned traitors. Of these, Sir Simon Burley had been guardian to Richard by the appointment of his gallant father the Black Prince. He had watched over the infancy and youth of his charge with parental solicitude, and the young king regarded him with filial affection. Employed to negotiate the marriage between Richard and his queen, the happiness of the royal pair cemented their attachment to their friend and counsellor and every effort which anxious friendship could dictate was made to save him from unmerited punishment. CHAP. II.

The king deprived of the most precious attribute of his throne the power of extending mercy to the condemned, and obliged to solicit favour from those whom he had been accustomed to command, in the extremity of his grief condescended to implore his uncle to extend a pardon to his dear and trusted friend. The tyrant replied that he must either sacrifice his favourite or his crown. The beautiful the gracious the good Queen Anne joined her prayers to those of her husband, and kneeling for three hours with tears and entreaties pleaded the cause of mercy, but in vain; the inexorable Duke remained unmoved and returned a stern denial to the royal beauty weeping at his feet. The Earl of Derby softened by the distress of his relatives and touched by the virtues and accomplishments of the persecuted knight, essayed to melt the vindictive spirit of his uncle: equally unsuccessful he turned from him in anger, and Gloucester with unrelenting cruelty pursued his fierce revenge.

CHAP. II. Richard still unwilling to abandon every hope of saving his friend persisted for three weeks in asserting his innocence against his accusers; and by refusing to assent to his condemnation, obliged the Duke of Gloucester to have recourse to sinister means to effect his purpose.* During the absence of the king and those lords who were favourable to their sovereign's wishes he summoned Sir Simon Burley to appear; his fate had been previously decided by the duke's party, and condemnation
May 5. was followed by immediate death.† His fellow prisoners Sir John Beauchamp, Sir James Berners and Sir John Salisbury, were executed a few days afterwards; and satiated with blood the duke at length desisted from his work of slaughter.

Gloucester and his associates continued to direct the government for the ensuing twelve months, whilst Richard retained merely the name and title of a king. The administration of his uncle though less sanguinary than its opening had promised, was not distinguished by any illustrious actions nor of a kind to secure the public voice and interest the nation in its continuance. The duke's popularity began to decline; and the confederacy which in

* Parliament Rolls.

† The character of Sir Simon Burley has been blackened by the monks of Canterbury, who ascribe his untimely end to his design of removing Becket's shrine to Dover, for security against the French fleet. Knyghton says he was originally worth but twenty marks, but rose to such a height of wealth that he enjoyed above 3000 marks a year; and gave one Christmas to his own and the king's servants and retainers, in liveries, 140, 160, and e 220 suits, some of cloth of gold, and some of scarlet. Froissart says, "from my youth I had known him a gentle knight and a man of parts."—*Gough's Sepulchral Monuments.*

its commencement had been so irresistible, no longer meeting with opposition dissolved of its own accord. Richard acquired the friendship of several of Gloucester's partisans; he perceived the advantage which he had gained, and by an effort as daring and successful as that which had saved his life in Smithfield he boldly released himself from the sway of his uncle. CHAP. II.

At a general council held after Easter the king suddenly required the Duke of Gloucester to tell him his age. "Your Highness," returned the duke, "is in your twenty-second year." "Then," said Richard, "I must be old enough to manage my own inheritance; it is not just that I should remain in ward longer than any other heir in my dominions. I thank ye, my lords, for the pains you have taken in my service, but shall not require your assistance in future." Before the assembly had recovered from the astonishment occasioned by this unexpected address, he demanded the seals from the Archbishop of York and the keys from the Bishop of Hereford. The council was immediately dismissed and another formed more agreeable to the king, in which the Duke of York and the Earl of Derby, though sharers in the commission so odious to the sovereign, retained a place. The Duke of York had been a mere cipher in his brother's hands and his conduct to Richard was unmarked by the brutality which had disgraced the Duke of Gloucester. Bolingbroke though he had taken a more active part again his cousin had the address to regain his favour, and Gloucester alone of the princes of the blood de- 1389. May 3.

CHAP. II. parted from court in sullen discontent: yet that the king was not unwilling to receive him into grace again may be inferred by his recall to a seat in the
1389. council, on the return of the Duke of Lancaster from Guienne.*

* Knyghton. Walsingham. Rymer.

CHAPTER III.

Campaign of John of Ghent—Marriages of the Princesses—Richard's Administration—Bolingbroke's Policy—Favour enjoyed by John of Ghent—Disputes in the Council Chamber—The Earl of Derby's Expedition—Gloucester's inordinate avarice—Death of the Queen—Richard's departure for Ireland—Death of one of the Favourites—Suggestions respecting the King's Second Marriage—Alliance with France—Character of the Duke of York—Third Marriage of John of Ghent—Gloucester's discontent—Reports relative to the Duke of Gloucester—Competition between him and Bolingbroke—Conduct of John of Ghent towards his Brother—Arrest of the Earl of Arundel and of Gloucester—Appeals of Treason—Arundel's Answer—His Execution—Warwick's Pusillanimity—Gloucester's Death and Attainder—Petition of the Commons—Banishment of the Primate.

CHAP. III.

THE expedition of John of Ghent into Spain was in its commencement attended by a series of brilliant successes; town after town submitted to his victorious arms and he had possessed himself of a vast tract of country when his progress was stopped by the ravages of the climate amongst his troops. Attacked in his own person by disease which nearly reduced him to the grave, he was obliged to retreat to Guienne, and leave the task of bringing off the remnant of his shattered army to his son-in-law, Sir John Holand. But though baffled in his attempt to gain the crown of Spain by force, he fixed it upon

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his posterity by a master stroke of policy.* The duke had concluded a marriage between the King of Portugal and Phillippa his youngest daughter by his first wife; a prudent choice on the part of the Portuguese to avoid embroiling themselves with their neighbours of Castille, by a claim which would involve them in continual war or unite the two crowns under one sovereign, an event equally undesired by both countries: and when the mortality amongst his troops compelled him to relinquish his conquests, he listened with apparent pleasure to the proposals of the Duke of Berri eldest son of the King of France, for the hand of Catherine the daughter of Constance, the heiress of her mother's rights, desiring only to consult the King of England his nephew, upon the subject. The Duke of Berri was satisfied with so favourable an answer, and John of Ghent artfully employed the time which necessarily intervened before a reply from England could be obtained, in spreading intelligence of the negociation through the surrounding courts. The news of an alliance pregnant with such serious evil to Castille soon reached the ears of the king, and he hastened to prevent it by the only expedient in his power, that of offering his own son as a husband for the princess. Constantia the duke's consort, waived her claim to the throne in favour of her daughter, and a marriage was immediately concluded which gave to Spain a long line of sovereigns of the illustrious house of Lancaster.

The administration of the government of England which Richard had now resumed, proceeded for

* Froissart.

some time in comparative tranquillity. The king seemed anxious to conciliate the affection of all the princes of the blood, and he had not as yet betrayed that thirst for revenge and that rapacious appetite for gold which afterwards so directly led to the loss of his crown and life. But though a good understanding apparently subsisted between the Earl of Derby and the sovereign whose pardon for his participation in the acts of the Lords' Commissioners he had asked and obtained upon his knees, the exclamations wrung from Richard in the agony of his despair at a subsequent period, would lead us to imagine that Henry Bolingbroke's ambitious spirit had early taught both his father and his cousin to regard him with apprehension, and that the former* had more than once determined to defeat his traitorous designs by putting him to death. Bolingbroke's courtship of the common people and employment of every popular art to secure their voices is described by all our historians; and it would appear that at one time he warmly seconded the opinions of the Duke of Gloucester, who upon every occasion placed himself in direct opposition to the wishes of the king, disdaining to make the slightest attempt to efface by a temperate demeanour the remembrance of those cruel excesses which he had committed in the insolence of his power.

Richard had now learned to distinguish his true friends. All jealousy of his uncle John of Ghent had subsided and he testified the extent of his attachment to this valued kinsman by the magnificent grant of the sovereignty of Guienne for life.

* See Webb's translation of Creton's Metrical History.

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On the arrival of the Duke of Lancaster at the seat of his government he found the inhabitants strongly attached to the memory of the Black Prince, and considering themselves as subjects only to the immediate descendants of that hero, averse to the appointment. Their consequent murmurs were so loudly expressed that the king's advisers suggested the expediency of the duke's recal. This measure however did not suit the views either of Gloucester or of Bolingbroke, who were evidently under some restraint in the presence of John of Ghent; and when the question was debated at the council board the former maintained that it would be derogatory to the king to revoke a grant passed solemnly by the advice of his council and parliament upon account of the rebellion of his subjects; since he could not call himself master of his own inheritance unless he exercised the right of bestowing it on whom he pleased. The members of the council expressed their disapprobation of this bold sentiment in their countenances though none dared to dissent by words, so much were they in awe of the Duke of Gloucester. Their astonishment and dismay was increased by a speech of similar import from the Earl of Derby, and perceiving that the uncle and the nephew were in league together they would not carry on the discussion any farther, but in low whispers one to the other testified their dislike of the high tone which these princes had assumed. The duke and earl indignant at this mortifying rebuff, flung out of the council chamber; and after a hasty dinner by themselves in the hall, the Duke of Glou-

* Froissart.

cester took a slight leave of the king as he sate at table and left the place. CHAP. III.

John of Ghent was recalled, and Richard still continuing to govern with prudence and moderation the murmurs and complaints of Gloucester's faction were directed against the king's disinclination to pursue foreign conquests and the consequent dearth of military employments. The duke however declined an appointment in Ireland, alleging that it was a country in which neither wealth or glory could be obtained; and after having asked permission to join the Christians who were fighting against the idolaters of Prussia suffered himself to be prevented from lending his assistance to the cross by a storm at sea which obliged his ship to return to port a few days after his embarkation. The Earl of Derby,* more in earnest in his wish to gather laurels was not so easily deterred. In the year 1390, attended by a numerous retinue he served a campaign against the Lithuanians; and comparisons were even now drawn between his active valour and the king's determined sloth, much to the disadvantage of Richard. After the earl's return however from Prussia it does not appear that he shared in the violent councils of the Duke of Gloucester, whose concurrence with the sovereign's wishes was only to be purchased by rich gifts.

Avarice at this period was one of the ruling pas-

* Henry of Bullingbrooke, Earl of Derby, loath to spend his hours in sloath, but desirous to pursue renown in forraine parts, sayled over to the warres in Prussia, where in sundry places against the Lithuanians he won great honour, which by comparison of King Richard's calmnesse, prepared a way for him in the Englishes affection to poynts more eminent.—*Speed.*

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sions of the great who made a shameless display of their never-ceasing desire to add to fortunes already enormous, and scrupled little respecting the means of appropriating any species of property once placed within their grasp. "The Duke of Gloucester," says Froissart, "was cunning and malicious, and continually soliciting favours of King Richard, and pleading poverty though he abounded in wealth; for he was Constable of England, Duke of Gloucester, Earl of Buckingham, Essex, and Northampton, and enjoyed besides pensions from the King's Exchequer to the amount of four thousand nobles a year; and he would not exert himself in any way, if he were not well paid." This mercenary spirit was shared by Gloucester's contemporaries: and it is said that the affection which once subsisted between him and his brother the Duke of Lancaster, was considerably weakened by a successful manœuvre on the part of the latter to obtain for his son a rich inheritance, which Gloucester had hoped to fix irrevocably in his own family.* The duke had married the eldest daughter and co-heiress of Humphrey Earl of Stafford and Northampton, one of the richest lords and landholders in England, his yearly income being valued at fifty thousand nobles. The younger sister of the duchess remained under the guardianship of her brother-in-law, who anxious to secure the whole property kept her strictly secluded from the world. Conversing only with nuns, the young heiress seemed inclined to renounce the splendid destiny which awaited her at a brilliant

* Froissart.

court, for the tranquil pleasures of a conventual life, and Gloucester departed upon an expedition to France in the full conviction that his fair kinswoman would take the veil. The vigilant eye of John of Ghent had been long fixed upon the intended nun whom he was desirous to unite in marriage with his heir. In the absence of Gloucester the artful duke prevailed upon the Countess of Arundel the aunt of the co-heiresses, to assist in his design. The countess managed the whole affair very adroitly: after paying a visit at Plesley, the Duchess of Gloucester's usual residence, she invited the Lady Mary her youngest niece, to accompany her to Arundel Castle where she was introduced to Henry of Lancaster, and a marriage effected which destroyed Gloucester's avaricious hope. "The duke," observes Froissart, "had no inclination to laugh when he heard these tidings, for it would now be necessary to divide an inheritance which he considered wholly as his own. When he learned that both his brothers had been concerned in this matter, he became melancholy, and never afterwards loved the Duke of Lancaster as he had hitherto done."

The death of Richard's consort Anne of Bohemia, in the year 1314, was the remote cause of infinite evil. The king overwhelmed with grief thought at first only of indulging his affliction. He celebrated the funeral obsequies with extraordinary splendour; and we are told that a slight shewed by the Earl of Arundel upon this occasion revived all the king's displeasure against the offender, and even led to his destruction which followed within a few years afterwards. In allusion to the circumstances

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which produced the earl's disgrace, Walsingham says, that Queen Anne's burial was branded with the execution of that gallant nobleman. Richard dissipated his melancholy by an expedition to Ireland where he reduced the rebel tribes to obedience.' But the gratification obtained by his triumph was alloyed by the disastrous fate of his still-valued friend the Duke of Ireland, who received a mortal wound from the tusk of a wild boar whilst journeying through a forest in Brabant: not deeming it prudent to evince the extent of his attachment to that unfortunate favourite, the king did not send for his body until three years afterwards; nevertheless he seized the occasion to grant a pardon to Sir John Lancaster the companion of the duke's exile, and restored the earldom of Oxford to his uncle Aubrey De Vere.

The probability of the king's second marriage infused as we are informed by Froissart, new hopes into the mind of the Duke of Gloucester, who flattered himself that he should succeed in accomplishing the alliance of the monarch with his own daughter: but if Richard on a former occasion had declined a union with a Lancastrian princess through dread of his uncle, John of Ghent, he was now still more unwilling to become the son-in-law of Thomas of Woodstock. So far from desiring a closer connection with his haughty kinsman the anxiety never sufficiently concealed which the king had long entertained to secure a permanent peace with France, now openly manifested itself in the solicitation of the hand of Isabel daughter of Charles VI., a princess no more than eight years old. The Dukes of York and Lancaster approved of this match; the

former had married a second time and was now united to a beautiful young woman daughter of the Earl of Kent, and never fond at any period of his life of interfering in state affairs, was grown still more devoted than formerly to the gratification of the banquet and the amusement of the chase.* The latter had lately received an important favour from the king, having again become a widower he had exposed himself to the censure of the world by taking for his third wife Alice Swynford, a lady of beauty and accomplishments, but of low birth and more than dubious virtue. She had borne him several children during the lifetime of the two preceding duchesses, and the displeasure conceived by the ladies of the court and more particularly by the Duchess of Gloucester, at her exaltation, would have subjected the Duke of Lancaster to many mortifications, had not Richard happy to oblige his uncle countenanced and supported his new consort; not only securing to her the enjoyment of those honours and dignities to which her marriage had entitled her, but even exerting himself to procure the consent of parliament to the legitimation of her children the eldest of whom he created Earl of Somerset.†

When this marriage (says Froissart) was told to the ladies of nigh rank, such as the Duchess of Gloucester, the Countess of Derby, the Countess of Arundel, and others connected with the royal family, they were greatly shocked, and thought the duke much to blame. They said he had sadly disgraced himself by thus marrying his concubine; and added, that since it was so, she would be the second lady in the

* Froissart. † Parliament Rolls.

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kingdom, and the Queen Isabel of France would be dishonourably accompanied by her; but that for their parts they would leave her to do the honours alone, for they would never enter any place where she was. They themselves would be disgraced if they suffered such a base-born duchess, who had been the duke's concubine a long time before and during his marriages, to take precedence, and their hearts would break with grief if it were to happen. Those who were the most outrageous on the subject, were the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester. They considered the Duke of Lancaster as a doating fool, and declared they would never honour his lady by calling her sister. The Duke of York made lightly of the matter, for he lived chiefly with the king and his brother of Lancaster. The Duke of Gloucester was of a different way of thinking, he yielded to no man's opinion, was naturally very proud and overbearing, and in opposition to the king's ministers, unless he could turn them as he willed."

The king had not been inattentive to the fortunes of his other uncles, but no favour could win a gracious concession from the Duke of Gloucester: indulging in the moroseness of his disposition, the latter took no pains to conceal his disgust at the frivolous amusements of the court, and affecting to disdain the pacific temper of the sovereign he ingratiated himself with the discontented and unemployed knights by espousing the national prejudice in favour of a war. As, too, in the plenitude of his power he had displayed the savage ferocity of his relentless heart, so, when no longer able to deal destruction and death upon those who had incurred

his hatred he gratified his spleen by uttering sarcasms upon the existing government, and studied how to convince the world that his hostility at least was unabated though his power had ceased. He made a parade of his dislike to the proceedings of the council, not appearing at the board until after the lords had assembled, and departing before the conclusion of the meeting. These petty but unceasing provocations kept the flame of resentment alive in the king's breast, when the deep wrongs which had been received from his tyrannical uncle in earlier days might have been forgiven, had they not been followed and their memory revived by so much persevering enmity. The following story, which is strongly illustrative of the style of language in which the Duke of Gloucester indulged himself when addressing the monarch he delighted to insult, is to be found in Grafton, and is also noticed by all the old historians.

The Duke of Bretagne, a short time after the dissolution of parliament in 1397 sent according to previous agreement a sum of money to the King of England which he had formerly borrowed, and for which he had pledged the town and haven of Brest as a security for the repayment. Richard unwilling to embroil himself with foreign powers, and preferring in this instance the strict law of honour to the breach of faith which the policy of courts might have excused, resigned the town upon the fulfilment of the stipulated terms. The Duke of Gloucester, anxious for war and aware of the great importance of the port thus imprudently relinquished, condemned in harsh language the folly of restoring so

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splendid an acquisition for the sake of a promise which few monarchs would have scrupled to break. One day at court seeing the hall filled with disbanded soldiers who deprived of their warlike occupations were living in poverty and idleness, Gloucester observed to the king that the poor fellows who crowded round the palace had been ill paid, and being unemployed were destitute of the means of obtaining their subsistence. Richard in reply said, that he could not be blamed for the situation to which these men were reduced, but he would take care that they should receive the full amount of their pay. The duke answered, "that it had been better they had continued where they were; he, the king, should first have taken a town by his own valour and conduct before he resigned what his ancestors had left him." Richard stung by this reflection, and scarcely imagining that he heard aright, exclaimed, "What is it you say, uncle?" The Duke unabashed repeated the offensive words; and the indignant monarch unable to restrain his anger passionately rejoined, "Think you that I am a fool, or a merchant, to sell my land? No! by John Baptist, no! But our cousin the Duke of Bretagne having paid the sum for which the town and haven of Brest were engaged to me, both honour and conscience require that I should restore it." The historian informs us that the duke's rude speech made a strong impression upon Richard's mind, and that he hated his insolent relative ever after for the "brand of cowardice he had cast upon him." A matrimonial alliance between the royal families of England and France afforded ample

scope for Gloucester's animadversions, and though his consent was purchased at a high price he did not the less scruple to express his indignation at the utter extinction of military glory which had been effected by the king.

Richard's immediate friends were not silent observers of the insults which were unsparingly heaped upon him by his imperious kinsman. Reports were afloat that the duke meditated a second revolution in which he intended to place the Earl of March upon the throne. There were strong reasons to believe that at a former period he had contemplated the possibility of usurping the crown, but the idea must have been long abandoned. John of Ghent, the Earl of Derby, the Duke of York and his two sons stood before him; it was therefore natural that he should direct his attention to the Earl of March the rightful heir, yet a claimant certain of being opposed by the ambitious Bolingbroke, whose expectations strengthened by the king's marriage with a baby wife were infinitely more brilliant than those of his competitor. Roger Mortimer in the event of the king's death or deposition had scarcely a chance of obtaining his inheritance without the assistance of the Duke of Gloucester; and of that assistance he was secure, since the duke might hope to influence the conduct and councils of a sovereign raised by his efforts to the throne, whilst he must feel equally certain of being comparatively neglected should Henry Bolingbroke prevail. Thus the duke's active and aspiring disposition promised to be the most effectual check to the more dangerous projects of the house of Lancaster; and it was the

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misfortune as well as the crime of Richard that he listened to the dictates of revenge and slighted or overlooked the suggestions of policy. While life remained his crown and person were safe so long as Gloucester and Derby were opposed to each other; and their mutual ambition offered a certain pledge that their union would never be accomplished. Yet wantonly reminded of former injuries, and goaded by the recollection of his murdered friends, the king trusting to his apparent security blindly followed the impulse of his heart; and by crushing Gloucester paved the way for Bolingbroke's exaltation.

From the conduct of the Duke of Lancaster, it would appear that he had always disapproved of his brother's violent measures; and that if at any time he had cherished a hope of the accession of his immediate descendants to the throne of England, the advantages which would accrue from the removal of a man who openly favoured the more just pretensions of the Earl of March, might have influenced his opinion of the duke's guilt. But it is difficult to account for the active share which John of Ghent took in the ruin of so near a relative, without supposing that he was instigated by some personal feeling, some private interest or resentment; for it is certain that when Richard had determined to execute the scheme of vengeance which had been long brooding in his breast, he obtained the sanction of both his uncles the Dukes of York and Lancaster for the arrest of Gloucester. Their names appeared in a proclamation issued to still the popular clamour occasioned by the apprehension of a nobleman so

highly esteemed; and though that paper stated that the proceedings against the duke and his confederates the Earls of Warwick and Arundel were instituted for offences wholly unconnected with the events of the tenth and eleventh years of the king's reign, Gloucester was subsequently pronounced a traitor by his own brother, solely for his participation in the outrages of that period; no evidence being adduced to prove that his late discontent had assumed any other form than that of the open murmurs and secret menaces in which he but too frequently indulged.* CHAP. III.

The Earl of Arundel, who had rendered himself particularly offensive to the king, was seized and hurried to Carisbrook Castle; and the Earl of Warwick after being lodged in the Tower was conveyed for greater security to Tintagel in Cornwall. Richard himself accompanied the party appointed to apprehend his uncle; who, unconscious of the impending storm was enjoying domestic quietude at Pleshy. Gloucester it is said hastened to the gate of his castle to meet and welcome the royal visitor; but historians differ respecting the exact mode in which the arrest took place, some averring that the duke was immediately given into the custody of the Earl of Nottingham, Earl Mareschal, while by the statement of others it appears that the king after enjoying the hospitality of Pleshy, invited his unsuspecting relative to accompany him on his return to London and made him prisoner on the road. A vessel which lay waiting in the Thames conveyed the duke to Calais, a place of 1397, July 10.

* Parliament Rolls.

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confinement admirably suited to the views of his remorseless enemy.

The completion of the tragedy was at hand; Richard turned the weapons formerly employed by the Duke of Gloucester and his associates to their own destruction. They were appealed of treason by the Earls of Kent, Huntingdon, Nottingham, Salisbury and Somerset, the Lord le Despencer
Sept. 17. and Sir William Scroop. The king arrived in London attended by a strong body of Cheshire archers, and perhaps to this precaution he was indebted for the ready subservience of both peers and commons. The former charged the imprisoned lords with usurping the regal power and compassing the death of Sir Simon Burley against the king's will and consent; the latter declared all the pardons both general and particular which the king had been forcibly constrained to grant to be null and void; and impeached the Archbishop of Canterbury, brother of the Earl of Arundel, as an aider and abettor in the conspiracy which had set aside the authority of the crown. The Earl of Arundel being called upon for his answer pleaded the pardon which he had received from the king. Being told that it was revoked he disdained to ask for his life; and as there was little difficulty in proving his guilt upon the former occasion, he was condemned to suffer death, the merciless rapidity of the execution plainly evincing that revenge and not justice obtained the sacrifice.* Warwick pusillanimous in adversity, confessed himself to be a traitor; and purchasing a few years of existence by the abject acknowledg-

* Walsingham.

ment was banished to the Isle of Man. The death of the Duke of Gloucester, which took place at Calais under circumstances which fastened a strong suspicion of foul play upon the king, prevented his looked-for arraignment at the bar of the House. The lords appellants demanded judgment upon him, and being seconded by a petition from the commons, the Duke of Lancaster pronounced the sentence which declared his brother to be guilty of treason and confiscated his estates to the crown. The next day the duke's deposition which had been taken in prison was read; wherein after acknowledging his illegal persecution of the royal favourites, he strenuously maintained that since the day on which he had renewed his oath of allegiance to his nephew at Langley, his faith and loyalty had never swerved.* The commons next proceeded to pray for judgment against the primate, who had not appeared in his place since his impeachment. His absence was afterwards imputed to an ungenerous artifice on the part of the king; who it was said dreaded the effect of his eloquence and had therefore urged him not to irritate his enemies by appearing in person, but to entrust him with his defence. Richard now affirmed that the archbishop had confessed his guilt and thrown himself upon the royal mercy; whereupon his life was spared and he was pronounced to have forfeited his temporalities to the crown and incurred a sentence of perpetual banishment. Though the Duke of Lancaster had been induced either by a conviction that Gloucester had in reality harboured dangerous designs against

* Parliament Rolls.

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the king, or through a less conscientious motive to aid the vindictive measures of the monarch, his son the Earl of Derby, was too deeply implicated in the only conspiracy proved against the Duke of Gloucester, not to feel considerable apprehension at the unexpected development of Richard's character. He saw that under a gay and careless exterior he masqued a cruel, implacable, and designing heart. He placed no faith in his word, and could not trust to the outward marks of favour which he had received.

CHAPTER IV.

Elevation of the Nobles—Insecurity of the Appellants—Conversation between Norfolk and Bolingbroke—Richard's Inquiries—Mowbray's Surrender—his Denial of Hereford's Accusation—A Duel appointed—the Combatants appear in Arms—Richard's Interposition—he pronounces Sentence—General Discontent—Submission of the Duke of Lancaster—conclusions drawn from his passive conduct—advice to his Son—Bolingbroke's Interview with the King—their mutual Deceit—Bolingbroke's Departure—anxiety to ally Himself with the Duke of Berri—Salisbury's Embassy—Richard's Unpopularity—his Despotism—Death of John of Ghent—Seizure of Bolingbroke's Inheritance—The King's Expedition to Ireland—Bolingbroke's Correspondence—he lands in England—his Oath—Charges against Richard—Disaffection of the Army—Flight of Richard's Forces—Bolingbroke enters London—Defection of the Regent—Illegal Executions—The King's Delay—Albemarle's Treachery.

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RICHARD had endeavoured to make a distinction between the respective guilt of the confederates, by declaring that the Earls of Derby and Nottingham had been misled by the subtle practices of his uncle; but that their loyalty was proved by their early abandonment of his councils on the discovery of their treasonable purpose. The king had therefore included them in the new dignities which he conferred upon the nobles who had assisted in the de-

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molition of the objects of his long-smothered hatred. The Earls of Derby and Rutland were created Dukes of Hereford and Albemarle; the Earls of Kent, Huntingdon and Nottingham, Dukes of Surrey, Exeter and Norfolk; the Earl of Somerset, Marquis of Dorset; the Lords Despencer, Nevil, Percy and William Scroop, Earls of Gloucester, Westmorland, Worcester and Wiltshire. But the Earls of Derby and Nottingham, now the only two remaining of the five lords who had appealed the king's favourites of treason, were far from feeling secure in their new honours; they had seen Richard caress the very men whom he had marked for destruction; and knew not the moment in which they might themselves be sacrificed to his revenge. Their mutual danger seemed to warrant mutual confidence; yet Norfolk was irretrievably ruined by imparting his apprehensions to the Duke of Hereford.

It is impossible to account for the conduct of Henry Bolingbroke on this occasion, unless we suppose that aware of the utter faithlessness of a corrupt and profligate age he suspected that his old friend and coadjutor had laid a snare for him; and therefore resolved to anticipate the intended perfidy by revealing the particulars of a private conversation which passed between them at an accidental meeting on a public road: for the habitual wariness of Bolingbroke's character will scarcely permit us to imagine that he incautiously betrayed a secret of a nature so delicate and dangerous. According to his statement the Duke of Norfolk declared that he believed that they were both upon the point of being undone upon account of the affair at Radcot

bridge; and that the king's ministers and favourites, the Duke of Surrey, the Earls of Wiltshire and Salisbury, and through their machinations the Earl of Gloucester, had sworn to effect the ruin of six lords; being the Dukes of Lancaster, Hereford, Albemarle and Exeter, the Marquis of Dorset and himself; and that it was "so marvellous and false a world," that even the king was not to be trusted. Richard became acquainted with the import of the alleged observations either by common report or by a clandestine communication from his cousin, and summoning the Duke of Hereford to appear before him, he charged him upon his oath of allegiance to render an exact account of every circumstance which had occurred between himself and the Duke of Norfolk to the lords in council, after which he also required him to prosecute the duke before parliament. Mowbray did not appear in his place but surrendered upon proclamation; and having been admitted to the presence of the king manfully protested his innocence and gave the lie to his accuser. Richard placed both the dukes under arrest, and a court of honour was forthwith instituted to judge the cause between the parties. Hereford reiterated the charge which Norfolk as stoutly denied as far as it regarded the king, though he admitted that he had cast aspersions upon certain lords in Richard's service. The conversation had taken place without a witness, and each stedfastly adhering to his own statement the court could not decide upon the truth, but ordered the issue to be tried by single combat. The Duke of Hereford

* Parliament Rolls.

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as the appellant gave the challenge, and a day being appointed for the encounter they both appeared before the king in arms. Richard exulting in his late success and meditating the establishment of an absolute monarchy, saw and seized what he judged the favourable moment for removing from his presence two noblemen whose hostility he had once experienced and whose power he still dreaded.

After the preliminary ceremonies had been adjusted between the Duke of Hereford and his antagonist and the most intense interest created in the minds of the numerous spectators who awaited with anxiety the issue of the battle, the king suddenly suspended the proceedings; and affecting to take council from the committee of parliament, which formed a part of the assembled multitude, pronounced sentence of banishment upon the accuser and the accused. Norfolk was condemned to perpetual exile; but Hereford met a milder doom, he was ordered to quit the kingdom within the space of four months and the term of his absence was limited to ten years.* A conclusion so different from that which had been anticipated gave universal umbrage; and the injustice of the king's decree in thus confounding the innocent with the guilty, added pity and indignation to the strong affection which the people already lavished upon their idol Henry of Bolingbroke.

The Duke of Lancaster silently acquiesced in the king's proceedings against his son. Age had quenched that fiery spirit which had been wont to blaze forth upon the slightest provocation; and his

* Parliament Rolls.

tacit approval of a sentence which threatened to separate him for ever from the heir of his illustrious house, afterwards gave occasion to Bolingbroke's enemies to affirm that he had advised and sanctioned the measure.* But if we may give credit to the testimony of Froissart, who reports the current opinion of the time, the duke was not inattentive to his son's interests, having dissuaded him from going to Hungary and recommending him rather to amuse himself at the courts of his relatives in Castille and Portugal when he should become tired of France; advice which manifestly tended to his remaining within a convenient distance of England in order to take advantage of the first favourable opportunity which should offer to return.

Previous to Bolingbroke's departure a scene of deep dissimulation was acted between him and the

* Because his father was of the council and perhaps as Seneschal of England had to pronounce sentence officially upon his own son. Merks in his speech before the parliament in behalf of Richard II. has been made to say that "the duke was banished the realm by King Richard and his council and by the judgment of his own father." But if this testimony should be considered dubious, the fact is confirmed by the manifesto published under the name of Archbishop Scroope, and affixed in 1405 to the doors of the churches in York. This goes farther, affirming that he was doomed to exile "per sententiam domini regis Ricardi, domini Johannis ducis Lancastriae, populorum que (*sic*) dominorum temporalium et regni procerum voluntatem, *et consensum suum*, saltem verbotenus ab eisdem dominis expressatum—juratus de non redeando vel remeando in regnum Angliæ, priusquam gratiam regiam obtinuissat et habuisset." Henry must have given his father some trouble, as by Richard's own account of him John of Gaunt had passed sentence of death upon his son two or three times, and he was himself once obliged to intercede for his life. This seems an extraordinary story and was uttered in the heat of passion and anguish during one of his nights of tribulation; but it is reasonable to suppose that there must have been some foundation for it.—*Notes to a Translation of a French Metrical History of the Deposition of King Richard II. published in the twentieth volume of the Archæologia.*

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king. He had been encouraged to repair to the court at Eltham where he was received with an affectation of kindness by Richard; who concealing the secret feelings of an envious and jealous heart, attempted to amuse him with a hope of speedy recall by remitting at once four years of the terms of his exile. Henry not less skilled in the art of deceiving, answered with apparent gratitude, "My lord I humbly thank you; and when it shall be your good pleasure you will extend your mercy;"* though in his present disgrace the first fruits of that bitter animosity which he had purchased by his active participation in the Duke of Gloucester's conspiracy, he must have seen the settled purpose of the king to involve him in the same ruin which had pursued his confederates to banishment and to death.

Bolingbroke quitted the kingdom under circumstances which could not fail to excite the most painful sentiments in the breast of his persecutor. All ranks and classes crowded round him with testimonials of affection and respect. The Lord Mayor and many of the principal citizens accompanied him as far as Dartford on his journey, and others rode with him even to Dover. The common people were vehement in their expressions of attachment, and but that the voice of lamentation and mourning was mingled with the shouts and blessings which greeted him from assembled multitudes, his progress from London to the place of embarkation more nearly resembled the triumphant march of a conqueror than the pilgrimage of an exile proscribed and banished from his native land; whence repairing to Paris, the

* Froissart.

hospitable welcome which he received from the French court induced him (being now a widower) to ask the hand of Marie, daughter to the Duke of Berri, in marriage. The intelligence of this proposal alarmed the fears of his jealous kinsman, and Richard immediately dispatched the Earl of Salisbury to break off an alliance which would place the heir of Lancaster in nearly the same degree of affinity with himself to the crown of France; and upon this occasion he no longer scrupled to avow the bitterness of his hatred to Bolingbroke, but branded him in his letter to Charles VI. with the name of "traitor."*

The Earl of Salisbury, who it is said undertook his ungracious mission with reluctance,† forbore to pay the customary mark of respect of a visit to the exile;

* Carte offers a reason for the facility with which Richard interrupted the match between Henry and Marie. "This was the easier done, because according to the feudal law, received both in France and England, the principal nobility of each Kingdom could not marry in the other without leave of their sovereign, on pain of forfeiture of their honours and estates." His statement throws some light upon the origin of Richard's extraordinary conduct towards Bolingbroke after the gracious manner in which he had dismissed him into temporary exile; but it is not generally adverted to by historians; and the Rolls which announce the abrupt and tyrannical revocation of the king's indulgence, are silent upon the existing cause. It is indeed rather matter of *private* history than of public record, and could not have been inserted to any advantage; but had Henry actually married in opposition to him, Richard could then only have proceeded against him as he did when he might have had some shew of justification. The duke's sole offence in this case was that he had not previously asked his sovereign's consent when he placed his affection on a foreign lady; and notwithstanding the defence attempted by Hume, it seems no slight exertion of arbitrary authority that such an omission should have been visited with the confiscation of all *his estates*. Richard however was glad of a pretext to inflict additional chastisement upon one whom he had long regarded with aversion; and having called him "traitor," his next step, right or wrong, was to deal with him as such.—*Notes as above.*

† Froissart.

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and Henry thus made acquainted with the nature of the King of England's sentiments towards him, saw at once every chance of reconciliation and return to favour at an end, and was prepared to meet the extremity of his cousin's meditated vengeance. Subsequent events prove that he did not slight the warning.

The mad career of crime and folly pursued by Richard completely alienated the affections of his people. Freed from the restraint which had hitherto curbed his most vehement desires, the ill-advised monarch's vices became hideously apparent; he squandered large sums of money procured by rapine and extortion upon his rapacious favourites; set no bounds to his expenditure, and openly trampled on every law of justice and humanity in the plunder and oppression of his subjects. The nation was not sufficiently enslaved to endure with patience the king's repeated outrages upon its ancient rights and
1399 privileges, and the death of the Duke of Lancaster hastened a catastrophe which Richard could only have avoided by a timely reformation of those errors which had already conducted him to the brink of ruin. He attended the funeral of his uncle in St. Paul's, but was at no pains to assume the appearance of grief, and wrote an account of the event to the King of France with a sort of joy whilst he forbore to notice it to his cousin; a contemptuous slight afterwards doubly repaid by the studied insults heaped upon him by the vindictive Bolingbroke, when he in turn exulted over a fallen enemy.

Tempted by the riches of the house of Lancaster*

* Could an exact list be formed of the castles that descended by inheritance to the Duke of Lancaster the number might excite surprise. Besides

and intent upon the destruction of its envied greatness, the king resolved to deprive the exiled heir of his inheritance; and to support that iniquitous measure obtained from a council disgraced by its ready obedience to his illegal acts, a revocation of the letters patent which he had formerly granted in his kinsman's favour empowering him to take possession through the medium of an attorney of any and every estate which might fall to him in his absence. An injury so flagrant and so manifest excited general indignation; the people deeply wronged in their own persons, saw in this daring attack upon the property of a prince of the blood a system of unbounded despotism which called for immediate and powerful resistance. It was scarcely possible for Richard to be ignorant of the combinations which were daily forming against him; yet intoxicated by the success which had attended his late attempts to establish an arbitrary government, he refused to open his eyes to the perils which beset his path; and with a degree of infatuation which is scarcely to be credited chose this period of irritation and discontent for an expedition to Ireland, whither he allowed himself to be hurried by an intemperate

the castellated mansions of various sizes, with which doubtless most of his manors and towns were furnished, the following castles are distinctly specified as appertaining to the family at this time; Knaresborough, Pontefract, Pickering, *(co. York)*; Lydel, Dunstanborough *(Northumberland)*; Cykhull *(Durham)*; Bolingbroke *(Lincoln)*; Lancaster; Leicester; Kenilworth *(Warwick)*; Tutbury *(Stafford)*; Hertford; Pevensey *(Sussex)*; Monmouth, Skenfrith, Blanch Castle, Grossmont, Oken, Oggermore, Caer Kennyn, Kidwelly *(South Wales and on the Marches)*.—*Dugdale, Baronage*, i. p. 773, *et seq.* ii. p. 114, *et seq.* *Froiss.* xii. c. 12. *Archæologia*, p. 62. vol. 20.

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desire to revenge the death of the Earl of March, slain in a skirmish with the rebels.

Henry Bolingbroke had not been idle nor inattentive to his own interests, and received Arundel the exiled archbishop into his councils at Paris, entered into correspondence with the Percies who had refused to accompany the king to Ireland, and in all probability made overtures to his perfidious kinsman the Duke of Albemarle, afterwards so openly stigmatized with the name of traitor by the friends of Richard. By some writers it is affirmed that the citizens of London dispatched a secret message to Bolingbroke in France inviting him to return; but independent of this proof of popular affection, he was too well acquainted with the estimation in which he was held by the nation at large to entertain any fears respecting the nature of his reception; and there is good reason to suppose, that as lightly regarding the obligation of an oath as the perjured monarch who was now to suffer for the violation of the sacred pledge which he had given at his coronation, he had even before his departure from Paris contemplated the seizure of the crown [illegible] though he subsequently endeavoured to ma[illegible]pear that it was conferred upon him by [illegible] of fortuitous events. Artfully eluding th[illegible]ce of Charles VI. upon whose cautio[illegible] too securely relied, he procured a[illegible]nder pretence of visiting the Duke of B[illegible] sailing from France landed with a [illegible]nue not exceeding fifteen lances be[illegible]ew servants at Ravenspur in Yorkshire, and [illegible] instantaneously joined by the family of the [illegible]ies and their numerous dependants.

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If the House of Northumberland entertained any scruples at raising the arm of rebellion against the king, they were quieted by Henry of Lancaster's solemn oath taken upon the Gospels, that he came to England solely for the purpose of recovering his inheritance, illegally detained by the hand of power. This assurance he found it advisable to repeat; yet unwilling to trust entirely to the justice of his claim, he fanned the spirit of discontent already abroad, by letters* which were circulated throughout the country, and which imputed the most atrocious and unheard of designs to Richard, who was accused of entering into an alliance with foreign powers for the purpose of tyrannizing over his subjects; the people were told that his first measure would be to destroy by "divers torments" all the magistrates of those cities which had ever espoused the cause of the commons against him and his council, and that secondly he would secretly introduce his foreign emissaries at a festival where he intended to assemble all the great burgesses, merchants and magistrates, whom he would cause to be apprehended by the mercenaries in his pay, and oblige to purchase redemption "by the payment of such heavy imposts, subsidies and tallages, as he should please." "Wherefore, my friends and good people," said Bolingbroke in his letter, "when the aforesaid matters came to my knowledge I came over as soon as I could to inform, succour and comfort you to the utmost of my power;

* The MS. Ambassades has preserved the substance of the *Le. Br.* which was addressed to the city of London, and it is published in the twentieth volume of the Archæologia. One hundred and fifty to the same purport were sent to different places.

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for I am one of the nearest to the crown of England, and am beholden to love and support the realm of England as much or more than any man alive; for thus have my predecessors done. My friends, may God preserve you: be well advised, and think well of that which I write to you. Your good and loyal friend, Henry of Lançaster." These things,

"Proclaimed at market crosses, read in churches,"

were admirably adapted to catch the vulgar ear so prone to listen to the marvellous. They raised a general outcry amongst the people who, eager for change and incensed against the king, exclaimed with one accord, "Let Richard be deposed, and Henry declared our lord and governor."

In the meantime the invader used more subtle artifices to persuade the nobles to abandon their sovereign; he assured them that Richard intended to sell all the possessions which his ancestors had won in France to Charles VI., and this assertion was supported by the late resignation of Brest and Cherbourg, places which, however, the king had considered himself bound in honour to relinquish.

Henry's undoubted rights, added to the calumnies so industriously disseminated and so implicitly believed, raised an overwhelming party in his favour; the grievances which he represented himself as coming to redress, and the justice of his claim, wrought so strongly upon the minds of the nobility, that the Duke of York, regent in the absence of the king, who had summoned the retainers of the crown to assemble under the royal banners at St. Alban's,

found himself at the head of a force more inclined to espouse the cause of the invader, than to point their arms against him. Richard's immediate friends the Earl of Wiltshire together with Bussy and Green, members of the committee of parliament and the instruments of his most odious exactions, struck with a sudden panic, fled to Bristol, and the Duke of York, either unequal to combat with the difficulties of his situation or secretly inclined to favour Bolingbroke, marched westward to meet the king on his expected return from Ireland, and left the north road unguarded and free to the approach of the insurgents. Henry speeded forward to the metropolis, gathering strength at every step; the few followers who attended him upon his landing in Yorkshire were swelled to an army of sixty thousand men when he entered London. He was received every where with shouts of triumph, and the joy which pervaded the metropolis at his arrival was commensurate with the grief manifested by its inhabitants on his departure. Froissart tells us that the whole town was so rejoiced at the earl's return that every shop was shut, "and no more work done than if it had been Easter day."

Bolingbroke's residence in the capital was short, and wholly devoted to conciliating attentions to the citizens; having secured them in his interest he marched to the west, and so closely followed the route of the Duke of York that he reached Evesham the same day in which his uncle arrived at Berkely. An interview took place between the parties, and the fate of Richard sealed by the desertion of the regent, who was persuaded to abandon the royal cause and

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to act in concert with the Duke of Lancaster. Incapable of any great or generous action the Duke of York's natural indolence always induced him to adopt the measures of the strongest party; he had acted under Gloucester during the whole period of his usurpation, had been equally subservient to the sovereign when the increase of his power encouraged him to visit the author of his greatest humiliation with the fury of long restrained vengeance; and now perceiving that the hearts of the people were with Bolingbroke, he fell away from his unfortunate nephew at the moment of his utmost need, without an effort to preserve him from impending ruin. It will be remembered that Henry had suggested a cause of alarm to the House of York, by asserting that the Duke of Norfolk had informed him of the existence of a secret conspiracy which would endanger the lives and fortunes of the most potent lords of the realm, including the Duke of Albemarle; and that this stratagem had the effect of alienating the affections of the latter from the king we may conclude from the line of conduct which he immediately adopted: we are told that notwithstanding the accumulated favours which he had received from Richard, he (unhappily too well assured of the insincerity of the monarch's professions), retired from court to his father's residence at Langley, and only joined the royal army in Ireland because he was constable and his attendance required by the duties of his office. That he took advantage of the sovereign's confidence, who we are informed was immoderately fond of him, to give advice which he

* Froissart.

knew must lead to his destruction, appears evident from the ruinous delay which Richard was induced to make in his return to England, by the suggestions of evil counsellors interested in his detention from a spot where his presence was so loudly called for by the pressing danger of the crown. The subsequent conduct of the nobles who at that time surrounded the king plainly point out the traitor; and in the interim the desertion of his father, from whatever cause it arose, was of infinite service to Henry. Their forces now united consisted of a hundred and twenty thousand men, formidable in themselves, and strengthened by the weight of the Duke of York, who added the authority of regent to his command. The governor of Bristol castle surrendered to the king's delegate though he had previously refused to treat with Bolingbroke, and the possession of this place enabled the latter to proceed to the Welsh frontier with a celerity which effectually prevented Richard's partizans in the county palatine from rising in his favour.

At Bristol Henry dipped his hands in blood by sacrificing to popular fury Scroope Earl of Wiltshire, together with Bussy and Green, members of the committee of parliament and the servile instruments of the oppression of the government. They were beheaded by the duke's command without a trial; and having thus cast off his allegiance and assumed the power of dispensing life and death, the adherents of both parties must have been prepared to see the dispute between the king and his enraged kinsman decided by force alone. The usurper left the Duke of York and his army at Bristol and marched to

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Chester, occupying in his route the castles appertaining to the duchy of Lancaster which lay upon that southern border, and by this judicious movement securing a district always particularly well affected towards the king.

Having halted at Chester and whilst waiting the expected arrival of Richard from Ireland, Henry reduced Holt, which in his anxiety to secure a more important post he had neglected whilst pressing onward to Chester. Adverse winds had proved favourable in the first instance to the invasion by preventing the intelligence of the troubles in England from reaching the opposite coast; and three weeks passed away without bringing any tidings of the king; to whom the news was at length conveyed either by Sir Stephen Scroope the chancellor, or by Sir William Bagot, both of whom escaped from the destruction of their associates at Bristol; but instead of proceeding immediately to Wales in person, Richard listened to the insidious councils of Albemarle, and dispatched the Earl of Salisbury to levy troops at Conway, promising to follow without delay from the port of Waterford; where however still under the guidance of his faithless adviser he was persuaded to remain, wasting his time in collecting a fleet until the opportunity of striking an effectual blow was lost, while his soldiers also were exposed to the artful suggestions of an enemy who was but too successful in alienating them from their allegiance.

CHAPTER V.

Dispersion of Salisbury's Army—Richard's Return—his Abandonment—Flight to Conway—Albemarle's Defection—Richard's Disappointment—Message to Bolingbroke—its Reception—Surrey's Imprisonment—Exeter's Detention—his Letter—Richard's Wanderings—Northumberland's Mission—Revival of the King's Hopes—Seizure of Two Castles—Northumberland's Proposals—their Acceptance—The Bishop of Carlisle's Distrust—Northumberland's Oath—his Departure—Capture of Richard—his Rage and Lamentation—his Despair—Conduct of Henry of Lancaster—Richard marches in the Train of the Conqueror—is committed to the Tower—Bolingbroke claims the Crown—Richard's Abdication—Superior Title of the Earl of March—Lancaster's Pretensions—his Speech—Richard is deposed—Lancaster's Election—Submission of the Friends of the Earl of March—Ceremonials at Henry's Coronation—Disputes of the Nobles—The Titles bestowed by Richard are annulled—Imprisonment of the Mortimers—Henry of Monmouth created Prince of Wales—Richard's Friends conspire against Henry—Treachery of Rutland Defeat of the Insurgents—Execution of Kent and Salisbury—Murders at Bristol—Fall of Huntingdon—Pardon of Two Ecclesiastics—Richard's Death—Suppositions concerning it.—Reports of Richard's Escape.

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THE forces raised by the Earl of Salisbury at Conway, alarmed at the king's protracted absence, and continually deceived by the strange reports which were in circulation respecting the cause, melted rapidly away; and a few days after their

CHAP. V. dispersion Richard arrived at Milford Haven, attended by a considerable body of men; but these, already disaffected to his cause and intimidated by the lukewarm reception which their leader experienced, deserted in such vast numbers during the night that the betrayed monarch dared not trust to the strength or the fidelity of the remainder. Unacquainted with the disastrous result which had attended the Earl of Salisbury's levy, Richard's council proposed that he should repair in secret and in disguise to Conway, whence he might either fly by sea to Guienne or hazard a battle with the enemy. A few of his friends advised him to re-embark without delay and hasten to Bourdeaux; but the former opinion prevailed. Accompanied by a slender train consisting of his uterine brother the Duke of Exeter, the Duke of Surrey, the Earl of Gloucester, the Bishop of Carlisle, Sir Stephen Scroope, Sir William Fereby, and eight others, he quitted the remnant of his army in the dead of the night and bent his course towards Conway.

Upon the discovery of the king's departure, the perfidious Duke of Albemarle went over with Sir Thomas Percy to the Duke of Lancaster. The forlorn monarch arrived at the place of his destination to witness the abolition of every hope of effectual resistance, and to discover that his solitary chance of safety rested in immediate flight. Wavering and irresolute, ignorant of Henry's ultimate designs and still persuading himself that his affairs might be retrieved, he permitted the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey to carry a message to his cousin, in the fallacious expectation that they would be enabled both

to fathom the intention of the former and to instruct himself in the readiest method of baffling or defeating them. CHAP. V.

The Duke of Lancaster received the messengers from Richard with secret joy. They discovered to him both the miserable condition to which the king was reduced and the place of his retreat; and Bolingbroke's fertile genius soon suggested the means by which he might be lured from his present wild but secure asylum in a mountainous country, of difficult access to an hostile army, and provided with the means of escape by sea. Upon the arrival of Exeter at Chester he bent his knee before the Duke of Lancaster, and said, "It is but reasonable, Sir, that I should pay you reverence, for your father was a king's son, and my wife also is your sister." "Rise, brother-in-law," said the duke coldly, "you have not always acted thus." Then taking him by the hand, he drew him aside and they conversed together a long time. The Duke of Exeter's loyalty was incorruptible; and though Henry in all probability did not venture to disclose the whole of his designs against Richard to the affectionate brother and faithful friend of the ill-starred monarch, the conduct of Bolingbroke excited his apprehensions and he was seen to shed a tear. The king's livery of the hart was taken from him, and the fatal emblem of the House of Lancaster, a red rose, substituted in its place.* He was separated from his nephew the Duke of Surrey companion of his embassy, to whom the Duke of Lancaster did not deem it necessary to extend his courtesy; taking little notice of him upon Aug. 9.

* MS. Ambassades.

CHAP. V. his entrance and afterwards ordering him into close confinement in the castle, and Exeter though in more honourable durance was not permitted to return to Conway, but either by threats or promises on the part of Henry that the king's crown and person should be held sacred, was persuaded to write a letter to the royal fugitive assuring him that he might fearlessly rely upon the offers of the Earl of Northumberland, who was chosen by Bolingbroke to weave the cruel snare in which his luckless rival was so inextricably involved. Every writer both ancient and modern, is unanimous in reprobating the impious perfidy of this base tool to Lancaster's ambition; but though nothing can be said in extenuation of his shameless disregard of the most sacred oath, the whole tenor of his latter years is calculated to infuse into the reader's mind a hope, that he was deceived himself by Henry's protestations and pretended moderation, and did not contemplate the issue that awaited the victim of his arts.*

During the absence of the two dukes, Richard, together with those few persons who clung to him in his fallen fortunes, wandered about from castle to castle; but finding every fortress dismantled and destitute of provisions, returned in mental and bodily distress to Conway. The arrival of Northumberland re-animated the king's too sanguine spirit. The latter entered Conway at the head of only five attendants, having taken possession of the castles of Rhuddlan and Flint in his route, and concealed the remainder of his party, consisting of a

* Metrical History.

thousand men at arms and four hundred archers, CHAP. V.
behind a rock, at the distance of eight miles from the monarch's retreat. The earl proposed to Richard upon the part of the Duke of Lancaster that he should promise to govern and judge his people by law; that the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey, the Earl of Salisbury, and the Bishop of Carlisle, should submit to a trial in Parliament on the charge of having advised the assassination of Gloucester; that Henry should enjoy his ancestorial dignity of Grand Justiciary of England, and that on the king's acquiescence with these offers the Duke of Lancaster should come to Flint, ask pardon of his sovereign on his knees, and then they should travel together in amity to London, or proceed thither by different roads as Richard might please to determine. These easy conditions were approved by the too credulous monarch; he declared to Northumberland his readiness to abide by them; and in a private consultation with his friends, he assured them of his determination to provide for their safety at their approaching trial, and to sacrifice their now triumphant enemies at the first favourable opportunity. The king's companions agreed with him respecting the expedience of accepting the terms which Henry offered; but the Bishop of Carlisle more distrustful than the rest proposed that Northumberland should swear upon the Host to the truth of his asseverations. Mass was accordingly performed, the earl did not refuse the solemn test, and Richard, first adjuring him to remember his oath and the God who had witnessed it, now suffered him to depart in order to facilitate the intended

CHAP. V. interview at Flint, in which he hoped to gloss over his late conduct, and to obtain a reconciliation with the Duke of Lancaster.

Completely deceived by Northumberland's representations Richard prepared to follow his treacherous councillor. Accompanied by twenty-two persons including his servants, he set forward after dinner and rode without molestation to a rocky pass washed on the left side by the sea and overshadowed by a lofty cliff, where, as the perjured guide had prepared, the unfortunate monarch was betrayed into the hands of his most inveterate enemy. Alarmed by the appearance of pennons in the valley, the king would have retreated, but Northumberland coming up at the moment seized the bridle of his horse and he was instantly surrounded and led away a prisoner to Flint. The unhappy captive called upon God to reward the earl and his accomplices at the last day for their treason and perfidy, and turning to his followers exclaimed, "We are betrayed and sold, but remember that our Lord was also sold and delivered over to the power of his enemies." When left alone with his companions in affliction, Richard's indignant spirit burst forth into lamentations and reproaches, "Ah dear cousin of Brittany," he cried, "alas! thou saidst truly at thy departure that I should never be safe while Henry of Lancaster was alive. Alas! thrice have I saved his life! for once my dear uncle of Lancaster, whom God have mercy, would have put him to death for the treason and villainy he had been guilty of. All night did I ride to preserve him from death, and his father yielded him to my request

telling me to do with him as I pleased. How true is the saying that we have no greater enemy than the man we save from the gallows. Once he drew his sword on me in the chamber of the queen, on whom God have mercy! He was of the council of the Duke of Gloucester and the Earl of Arundel; he consented to my death, that of his father, and all my council. By Saint John I forgave him all; nor would I believe his father who more than once pronounced him deserving of death!"*

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From this period Richard, though once enlivened by a momentary hope of eluding the vigilance of his keepers, seems to have abandoned himself to the most profound grief, and to have lost all expectation of receiving mercy at the hands of the Duke of Lancaster. After a sleepless night, he rose and heard mass, and then ascended a tower of the castle to watch for the arrival of the insurgent army. Bolingbroke's approach could be seen at a considerable distance: he marched in the midst of a gallant and exulting host, and the sound of their warlike minstrelsy was borne upon the breeze to the ears of the royal captive, who wept with his friends, as he watched the broad array stretching wide across the plain until it reached the sea. Richard was called away from this melancholy contemplation by a summ[illegible] dinner; and, convinced that the r[illegible] sceptre had passed away from him [illegible] not permit any distinction to b[illegible]

* Some of these exclamations are allu[illegible] traces of whi[illegible] I believe are to be found in histor[illegible] prised if with thi[illegible] impression and knowledge of the [illegible] of Henry towards[illegible] him he should have yielded [illegible] ns.—*Notes to a Trans-*
lation of a French History [illegible] King Richard II.

CHAP. V. self and the companions of his adversity, but obliged the Earl of Salisbury, the Bishop of Carlisle, Sir Stephen Scroope, and Sir William Feriby, to sit down to the same table; where without eating he protracted the repast, knowing its conclusion would bring the now dreaded meeting with Henry of Lancaster.

The duke had drawn up his soldiers beneath the mountains which skirted the castle; and while the king sate at his wretched meal stragglers from the halted army burst rudely into the hall, and by their threats and menaces prepared the fallen monarch for the destiny that awaited him. He was at length called out to the court-yard to receive his cousin. Bolingbroke presented himself completely armed, with the exception of his helmet: he bent his knee twice as he approached the king, who uncovering his head said, "Fair cousin of Lancaster, you are right welcome." "My lord," replied the duke, "I come before my time; but I will tell you the reason. Your people complain that for the space of twenty-two years you have governed them very rigorously; wherefore, if it please God, I will assist you to rule them better." Richard with patient humility answered, "Fair cousin, since it pleaseth you, it [illegible] us well." The Duke of Lancaster turned [illegible] the knights, and spoke a few words [illegible] the Earl of Salisbury in silence; [illegible] displeasure at the slight which [illegible] he had rec[illegible]he earl at Paris. Suffering too the reco[illegible] injuries to subdue every generous feel[illegible]is attendants to bring out the king's ho[illegible]hard and his friend

the Earl of Salisbury were desired to mount upon two miserable animals, an indignity expressly designed to add new wounds to the already depressed monarch, who was distinguished for the magnificence of his appointments, and the beauty and excellence of his stud. CHAP. V.

The proud moment of triumph to the house of Lancaster had now arrived. Richard had outlived the love of his subjects; and those men who would have resisted the usurpation of John of Ghent with hearts and hands, followed his ambitious son with shouts and blessings. Henry saw how strongly the tide of popularity ran in his favour. The public voice called him to ascend a throne, and he was not slow in obeying its summons. Whilst Richard, exposed to the derision of the multitude, riding in the train of the conqueror as a prisoner, and in his present degradation anticipating a scaffold at every step, played a conspicuous but melancholy part in the pageant which graced his kinsman's march to Chester. It would be difficult to imagine a situation more painful and humiliating: wherever the wretched monarch turned his eyes, they must have rested either on those whom he had deeply injured, and whose just resentment he now so bitterly experienced, on those by whose perfidious counsel he had been betrayed, or on the base and fickle minions of his court, now pressing forward to pay their deceitful homage to his rival: not an eye beheld him with compassion, not a word was uttered in his favour; the few who still adhered to him in their hearts, and desired only that he should receive a salutary lesson for the improvement of his future government,

CHAP. V. were obliged to conceal their sentiments with the utmost care, and to trust vainly for the return of better times and to the Duke of Lancaster's clemency. On Henry's triumphant entry into Chester, he delivered the custody of Richard to the charge of Thomas Fitzalan son of the Earl of Arundel, and Humphrey Plantagenet son of the Duke of Gloucester, saying to each, "here is the murderer of your father; you must be answerable for him:"* an act of strict but severe justice. Richard had possessed himself of the estates of his young kinsman, and assumed a personal controul over him in quality of his guardian; and Fitzalan in his own jeopardy had even deeper sense of hatred to the tyrant who had made him an orphan and an outcast. An interesting account of the sufferings of this persecuted youth is contained in an old chronicle of London, lately brought to light by the indefatigable researches of Mr. Nicholas: "Ye schall wete that Thomas, the son and heyre of Richard the Erle of Arundell, which Thomas, after the deth of his fadir, was dwellynge in houshold with Sir John Holand, Duke of Excetre, and holden in no reputacion, but alway in great reprof and despite, in moche disese and sorwe of herte, thorugh helpe of William Scot, mercer of London, privyly in a gromys clothinge sailed over the see and cam to his uncle, the Arche bysshop of Caunterbury that tyme being at Cologne."†

The king saw his brother the Duke of Exeter, but they dared not speak to each other; and the despairing anguish of Richard's heart evinced itself in the utter neglect of his person. We are told that he never

* Account and Extracts, ii. p. 225. † Harl. MS. 565.

changed his dress during the whole of his miserable journey to the Tower. The Duke of Lancaster remained three days at Chester, from which place he issued writs for the summons of a parliament in the king's name and then proceeded with his prisoner to London. Richard made an attempt to escape at Litchfield but was detected, and guarded with even greater rigour than before.* On his entrance into the metropolis the captive monarch was conducted through Westminster, and followed to the place of his confinement by the curses and execrations of a barbarous rabble, hardly restrained from dyeing their weapons with his blood as he passed along; whilst Henry, hailed like a guardian angel, paraded through the city attended by the mayor and citizens, amidst pomp and splendour and unceasing acclamations to St. Paul's, where to display his filial piety he bent weeping over his father's tomb.

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Aug. 20.

Sept. 21.

Bolingbroke regardless of his former oaths now openly aimed at the crown; and though justly reprobated as perjured and forsworn, it must be admitted that the temptation to supersede the Earl of March was strong, and that circumstances scarcely allowed him to hesitate in the deposition of Richard. The monarch's unremitting hatred had driven him to extremities: in recovering his inheritance he had been guilty of unpardonable offences, and the ruin of the king could alone secure his own safety. He possessed the good will [illegible] those who were adverse to his [illegible] the irresistible outcry [illegible] who saw with [illegible]

CHAP. V. oaths and protestations had won their swords and their services in the pursuit of justice, now preparing to wrest a sceptre from his sovereign's hand, dared not remind the cherished idol of the day of his solemn vows, and however unwillingly were urged far beyond their original intention, and compelled to become the slaves of one who only brought fifteen lances into the field when he landed at Ravenspur.

Parliament having assembled, the Duke of Lancaster determined to employ the fatal precedent established by the Commons in the reign of Edward II. to depose the present king; but to prevent all opposition from those who might still retain their fidelity to Richard, it was necessary to oblige the imprisoned monarch to make a formal renunciation of his crown. For this purpose Henry and his partizans visited him in the tower, and subdued by threats and menaces the indignant spirit which poured itself out in bitter reproaches against the Dukes of York and Albemarle, to whose double dealing he imputed his former guilt and present misery, exclaiming, "In a cursed hour were ye born. By your false counsel was my uncle Gloucester put to death." Appalled at length, and still clinging to an existence which he was assured he could not preserve on any other terms, he gave a reluctant consent; and as in the court-yard at Flint where fi[illegible]osition hopeless he submitted in silence [illegible]onqueror, so in the last trying [illegible] life he performed the p[illegible]nt composure, and i[illegible]ncaster and a de[illegible]

for the purpose of witnessing his solemn abdication, signed a resignation of the royal authority, and a declaration of his incapacity to govern, which absolved his subjects from their allegiance; to which was added apparently from his own free will a wish that he might be permitted to choose a successor in Henry of Lancaster. CHAP. V. Sept. 29.

To give greater weight to this important document, it was confidently asserted that Richard had voluntarily renounced the crown, in confirmation of a promise given by him to Northumberland whilst at perfect liberty at Conway, and in order to bring him into still deeper contempt with the people, his behaviour was represented to have been marked with unnatural and unbecoming levity: statements at complete variance with those of the witnesses of his interview with the earl, and little consonant with the grief and despair which he is described to have suffered when enthralled by the subtle devices of his enemies.

The two Houses of Parliament met in Westminster Hall, and having declared the throne to be forfeited by the misconduct and resignation of the king, arrogated to themselves a power to which they could not pretend the shadow of a right, and imitating the illegal act of the sovereign whom they had just deposed, proceeded to the election of a new king, to the prejudice of the rightful heir, a prince in every point unobjectionable, his title being perfect and acknowledged both by the nation, who had preferred Richard of Bordeaux to John of Ghent, as the representative of his father the Black Prince, and by the Parliament who had de-

CHAP. V. clared the late Earl of March the true heir of the crown. His youth precluded him from the commission of any offensive act, which might have afforded a pretext to set him aside, and in lending themselves to the ambition of Henry of Lancaster, they committed an outrage upon the crown, which though in former periods forcibly usurped by the younger sons of the conqueror, and by Stephen and John, was by the constitution of the country held to be hereditary and not dependant on the suffrages of the nation.

The Duke of Lancaster, aware of the injustice of his claim and the superior pretensions of the Earl of March, condescended to gloss his usurpation by circulating a report that he derived his title from Edmund Crouchback, or Cross-back,* founder of the House of Lancaster, son of Henry III. whom he averred had been unjustly deprived of his birthright in favour of his younger brother Edward I. on account of the deformity of his person. So poor an expedient could only excite ridicule; it was well known that Edmund took the name of Crouchback or Cross-back, from a badge which he assumed on an expedition to the Holy Land, and that he was not born until four years after his brother Edward; and perhaps ashamed of attaching much importance to so defective a title, Henry in his

* Some have referred the utmost root of the Lancastrian title to Edmund, indeed eldest son to Henry III. but by reason of his unfit deformity, his younger brother Edward had the succession, which is absurd and false. For one whom I believe before most of our monks, and the king's chronologer of those times, Matthew Paris, tells expressly the days and years of both their births, and makes Edward four years older than Crookback.—*Selden's notes to the Polyolbion.*

address to the Parliament merely made an allusion to his descent from Henry III., and mingled a claim of conquest with that of inheritance, whilst in conclusion he hinted at the necessity of his interference in the reformation of the state. His speech ran thus: "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this realm of England and the crown, with all the members and appurtenances, as that I am descended by right line of blood, from the good Lord King Henry III. and through that right that God of his grace hath sent me, with help of my kin, and of my friends to recover it, the which realm was in point to be undone for default of governance and undoing of good laws." Surrounded by friends and partizans more desirous to second his ambitious hopes than to examine the merits of a title liable to so many objections, the Duke of Lancaster's right of succession was unanimously acknowledged both by lords and commons; and the eventful day closed with the proclamation of Bolingbroke, by the style and title of Henry IV. King of England. CHAP. V.

The author of the French Metrical History so often quoted, declares that Henry was elected without a dissentient voice, "Because there was no man in that place for the old king, save three or four, who durst upon no account gainsay them." To the credit of human nature, our English historians affirm that one man amid those who had tasted Richard's bounty, and shared his friendship, dared to acknowledge a sentiment of pity and attachment to this unfortunate prince; and in justice to the memory of Thomas Merks, Bishop of Carlisle,

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CHAP. V. it becomes a duty to quote the authority of Hall, and other chroniclers, who assure us that this prelate, faithful under every change of circumstances, openly and in Parliament protested against the late proceedings; that he vindicated the king from the accusations of his enemies, and contended that he had not been guilty of any act that could justify the right they had assumed to depose him. Disdaining to consult his own safety when the welfare of his sovereign was at stake, he boldly and scornfully animadverted upon the title which Henry had advanced to the crown, fearlessly brought forward the superior claim of the Earl of March, and offered an example of disinterested loyalty which must ever be remembered to his honour. We are also informed by the old historians that, liberty of speech in those who espoused the weaker cause not being among the privileges of this Parliament, the bishop was taken into custody the moment he sate down, and conducted as a prisoner to St. Alban's, a measure which effectually silenced all farther opposition.

The power, the wealth, and the popularity of Henry had placed him on the throne to the exclusion of a family descended from an elder branch of the Plantagenets; the right of inheritance by females had never been the subject of doubt or of dispute in England, and the claim of Roger Mortimer, son of Edward Earl of March, by a marriage with Philippa, sole heir of Lionel Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III. had been formally recognized by parliament. The death of this nobleman had vested his title in a minor, and too weak to combat with so

potent a competitor the friends of the young Earl of March wisely endeavoured to lull the new king's jealousy by a silent acquiescence in his usurpation. Richard detained in strict confinement and afterwards doomed to perpetual imprisonment by the Lords in Council, was conveyed away privately by night, first to Leeds castle and subsequently to Pontefract.* Henry sent him a suit of black clothes and a black horse for his travelling equipments; a gloomy omen and fatally prophetic of the colour of his destiny! CHAP. V.

Henry of Lancaster was crowned with extraordinary circumstances of pomp and solemnity. Either to obtain remission for his broken vows or to possess the world with a high opinion of his piety, he did not appear at church until an hour unusually late on the morning of his coronation, having spent a long time in prayer with his confessor and in hearing mass in private. He chose to be anointed with oil imagined to be possessed of miraculous qualities, a present from the Virgin to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and appertaining to the house of Lancaster through the gift of a hermit, who prophesied at the same time that those kings who should be crowned with that sacred oil, should become true champions of the church; a title Henry was desirous to acquire, in opposition to the lenity if not to say favour which Richard had shewn to the disciples of Wickliffe. In addition also to the three swords carried by the chief officers of state at coronations, he directed that a fourth—to be entitled the "sword of Lancaster," the same which he had worn on his Oct. 13, 1399.

* Accounts and Extracts, p. 150.

CHAP. V. landing in Yorkshire,—should be borne naked with the point upwards by the Earl of Northumberland.

A new parliament assembled immediately after the coronation, consisting of the same individuals who composed the last, and of course equally devoted to the new sovereign; but though unanimity of sentiment reigned amongst the commons, the meeting of the Lords commenced with an ill augury for domestic peace. Those nobles who had supported Richard in his late attack upon the Duke of Gloucester, were called upon to vindicate their conduct. They excused themselves from entering upon their defence, by the plea of having been compelled to obey the king's commands by threats; and maintained that they were not more guilty than those who had countenanced the proceedings by their condemnation of the duke. A stormy discussion ensued: the Lord Fitzwalter accused the Duke of Albemarle of treason to King Richard, and throwing down his steel gauntlet, the floor rang with the like defiances from twenty other lords, who thus followed up the charge of their leader. The Lord Morley with less truth stigmatized the Earl of Salisbury under the name of double traitor, charging him with perfidy both to Richard and to Henry; and the accused nobles boldly returned these insults, retorting in terms of equal opprobrium. "Liar" and "traitor" echoed through the hall, and each being ready to support his allegation with his sword, Henry was compelled to interpose his authority to stifle these dangerous feuds.

The disputants were not silenced without considerable difficulty, and the undaunted resolution dis-

played by those noblemen who had been guilty of the most offensive act against the Duke of Gloucester and his friends, was productive of a favourable result to the inquiry which had occasioned so furious an altercation. They were only punished by the loss of those honours with which their services had been rewarded. Exeter, Surrey and Albemarle were bereft of their dukedoms,* and dwindled into the Earls of Huntingdon, Kent and Rutland; the Marquis of Dorset also deprived of his newly-acquired title was styled Earl of Somerset; and the Earl of Gloucester resumed his former rank as Lord Le Despencer. CHAP. V.

Henry secured the infant sons of the Earl of March in Windsor Castle, where they remained in honourable captivity: though affecting to overlook their claim when he ascended the vacant throne, he cautiously abstained from procuring an act of settlement of the crown by parliament, lest he might thereby admit the doubtful nature of his own right. His eldest son was created Prince of Wales and declared heir apparent to the throne; but the restless spirits of the time would not allow him to remain long in peaceable possession of a kingdom which he had acquired apparently with so much ease.

The close tie which united Richard with the Holands, his elder brother and nephew by the mother's side, could not be severed without difficulty; the deposed monarch also possessed well-wishers, who though unable to stem the tide which ran so strongly in favour of his rival, were ready to proceed against him the moment they could flatter themselves with

* Parliament Rolls.

CHAP. V. the slightest prospect of success. The Earl ked with tingdon and Salisbury and the Lord Le Despland, too deeply interested in the fate of the captive monarch to feel grateful for the moderation which had spared their lives, were no sooner released from present peril than they plunged into a conspiracy which had for its object the murder of Henry and the restoration of Richard. They drew the young Earl of Kent into their party, and with an extraordinary want of foresight which ultimately proved their ruin permitted the perfidious Rutland to share their councils.

It is probable that irritated by his degradation from the honours which he had received in the late reign, and by the contempt which even the monarch he had served must have felt for his infamous double dealing, he gave loose to the murmurs of discontent, and thus making common cause with Henry's more generous enemies, they unwittingly trusted him with their dangerous secret. The plot was well imagined; they caused a tournament to be proclaimed as one of the diversions for the Christmas holidays, and Huntingdon took upon himself to procure the presence of the king, who was invited to judge between him and the Earl of Salisbury, in consequence of a pretended challenge which had furnished a pretext for the meeting. The nature of this sport would admit of the assembly of a considerable number of armed retainers without exciting suspicion; and surrounded on all sides by an hostile force, Henry would have fallen an easy prey to his assailants. At a final interview agreed upon by the conspirators the Earl of Rutland did not appear; his absence however failed

played by the fears of his confederates, and they dis- CHAP. VI.
the mos a letter to him requiring his assistance at the appointed time: but fickle as he was treacherous he had abandoned their cause, and now suffered this important paper to fall into his father's hands, who entirely devoted to Henry, immediately acquainted him with his danger, an office readily shared by one who hoped to re-establish himself in the monarch's confidence by the sacrifice of his late associates. On the morning of the day appointed for the tournament the insurgent lords discovered that they had been betrayed, and obliged to relinquish their expectation of ensnaring the king, they changed their plans and attempted to surprise him by a bold attack upon Windsor Castle, at the head of five 1400. Jan. 5.
hundred horse; but already warned he had removed to London, and was at that moment actively employed in issuing writs for their apprehension. Baffled a second time, they openly raised the standard of rebellion, proclaimed Richard in the towns and villages which they passed in their route towards the west, and having been joined by Lord Lumley encamped in the neighbourhood of Cirencester. Here they committed an act of imprudence which precipitated their ruin: having posted their soldiers in the fields the Earls of Kent and Salisbury took up their lodgings in the town; the inhabitants were well affected to Henry, whose vigilance had supplied the mayor with a writ by which he mustered a considerable force in the king's name, and investing the quarters of the nobles in the night, a desperate but unequal conflict ensued. Valiantly defending them-

CHAP. V. selves for the space of three hours the Earls of Kent and Salisbury were at length compelled to surrender, having first stipulated that they should be admitted to an audience with the king.

The prisoners were conducted to the Abbey; but on the following evening a priest in their retinue having it was supposed set fire to some houses in the town for the purpose of facilitating their escape, the populace in those unhappy times ever ready to dip their hands in blood, were seized with uncontroulable fury at the suggestion, and gratifying a horrid appetite for slaughter dragged their victims from the place of their confinement and beheaded them in the street. Thus fell the Earl of Salisbury, one of the most learned and accomplished gentlemen of his age. A poet, a patron of literature, and a firm supporter of the reformed doctrines of religion, he had evinced the purity of his faith by removing the idols of a superstitious worship from his private chapel; and resolute in maintaining the creed which he professed, attended the meetings of the disciples of Wickliffe in armour. "He," says Walsingham, "who throughout his life had been a favourer of Lollards, a despiser of images, a contemner of the canons, and a derider of sacraments, ended his days as is reported without the sacrament of confession." The ruthless barbarity of his executioners deprived him even of a consolation considered to be so essential; but the earl possessed a better hope, and the contemplation of his character, his unshaken fidelity to Richard, his fine taste and the amiable qualities of his heart, sullied only by the contempt for human

life which characterized the martial spirits of the time, is a relief to the mind, shocked by the unmitigated vices of too many of his contemporaries. CHAP. V.

The Earl of Kent who suffered at the same time was sacrificed to the rash impetuosity of his relatives; he was only five-and-twenty, and had pleaded his youth in extenuation of his prosecution of the Duke of Gloucester. The persuasions of Huntingdon and Salisbury had urged him, it is said,* reluctantly into the act of rebellion against Henry; but once embarked he behaved very gallantly, and proclaiming Richard to be the true Lord of England, he strenuously assisted the Earl of Salisbury in endeavouring to excite the people to rise in his defence.

The Lords Lumley and Le Despencer who had advanced farther westward fell into the hands of the citizens of Bristol, Richard's devoted enemies, and the common people thirsting for their blood demanded their persons from the civil authorities and put them instantly to death. A similar fate awaited the Earl of Huntingdon; anxious to cross the sea he had fled to the coast of Essex; the wind was adverse, and compelled to wander from place to place clad in a mean disguise, his evil stars conducted him to Pleshy, where surrounded by the exasperated tenants of the Duke of Gloucester, in whose ruin he was considered to have been an active instrument, the discovery of his person was followed by the perpetration of another murder, and he was butchered by the mangling axe of a self-constituted executioner, a catastrophe which though shocking to humanity was in unison with the tenor of a life marked by Jan. 9.

* Froissart.

CHAP. V. bloodshed and stained with deeds of equal ferocity. As a knight John De Holand was distinguished for his valour and intrepidity and for his superior skill in the tilt. Froissart has preserved his own expression of the excessive delight which he took in fighting; he earned great applause in the campaign against Castille under his father-in-law John of Ghent, and carried off the prize at the most celebrated tournaments in France, Spain and England. A pilgrimage which the earl made to the Holy Land must not be omitted in this brief record of his turbulent career, as it was probably undertaken to expiate the crimes of his early youth; and there was something generous in his affectionate attachment to Richard, at a period when his close connection with Henry of Lancaster by marriage might have offered a hope that the long enmity which had subsisted between him and the Duke of Gloucester and the part he had taken in that prince's downfall, would be pardoned and forgotten. The summary vengeance that was executed by an enraged and lawless mob relieved Henry from his enemies without obliging him to consent to their deaths. A few only of the inferior conspirators suffered on a scaffold; and Roger Walden and Thomas Merks, two ecclesiastics who were also implicated in the plot, met with mercy from the king; the former only endured a short imprisonment in the Tower, and the latter, though tried and condemned as a traitor, was pardoned by the intercession of the Pope.

The unfortunate Richard did not long survive the fall of his friends; his existence was discovered to be incompatible with the safety of the reigning monarch;

and before the conclusion of the month which followed that whose opening had been marked by the attempt to procure his restoration, he ceased to be a denizen of earth. His death was imputed by the king to excessive grief for the fate of the conspirators; a report which gained little credit, it being generally supposed that he was suffered to perish by hunger, a charge afterwards boldly asserted against Henry by the Percies; and though the distraction and despair that Richard must have suffered from this new affliction will warrant the conclusion that he voluntarily put an end to an existence which had become so grievous and burthensome, or that the agony of his mind had brought on disease and occasioned premature dissolution, an acute writer has remarked, that had Henry felt entirely free from the guilt of the murder, he would have taken more effective measures to clear his character to the world than the unsatisfactory expedient of exposing the dead body of the king to public view in St. Paul's, the face only being uncovered, to prove that no act of violence had been perpetrated. The testimony of Richard's keepers, so easily to be procured, would have removed the strong suspicion which the most candid inquirer must entertain respecting Henry's share in this dark transaction; and since he neglected to take advantage of such obvious and imperative means of establishing his innocence, his solemn denial though confirmed by oath will have little weight. The brave defiance flung in Henry's teeth by the Percies contained a charge of perjury so strong and incontestable, that we cannot attach any importance to vows however apparently sacred and binding, uttered

CHAP. V. by one already proved to be "false and forsworn." At the same time it must be allowed that Henry was not a cruel gloomy despot, eager to shed the blood of his known or his suspected enemies; the scaffold in his reign groaned under the weight of multitudes who were sacrificed to his safety; but the victims thus ruthlessly exterminated consisted chiefly of the common people, a class who had never yet been spared by king, noble, or knight. Previous to the repeated attempts made upon his crown, three only of Richard's adherents met their death by his order; and though claiming the throne as a conqueror, he not only extended mercy but endeavoured to conciliate those persons whose ruin it was in his power to effect and whose enmity he had reason to fear; but his clemency and moderation in other circumstances can only incline us to *hope* that he was free from the stain of Richard's death, combined with the testimony of those who were about the king at the time it would have been conclusive, but will scarcely prevail in opposition to the doubts suggested by the line of conduct which he pursued on the occasion. If we believe Henry to be guilty, we admit that his prudence in involving the manner of Richard's death in impenetrable mystery, and answering his adversaries only by a dignified rejection of the charge, supplied him with the best and solitary measures which he could adopt to defend himself from the imputation; but if innocent, the cold regard which he manifested to secure his complete vindication in the eyes of the whole world, was not consonant with the wisdom which marked his character, and the fair reputation he was so

desirous to preserve; and though there is a possibility that he did not precipitate the fate of his unfortunate rival, the error in judgment which he committed in overlooking the necessity of instituting an inquiry respecting the cause of his death, is sufficient to fasten the stigma of Richard's murder upon his name to all posterity. CHAP. V.

The corpse of the deceased king was brought with little state to London, and laid upon a bier in St. Paul's church, the face from the eyebrows downwards being uncovered. Immense throngs crowded to gaze upon the body, but the precaution which occasioned this public spectacle availed nothing, failing to produce conviction that the king had been cut off by disease or self-destruction, or that he in reality had ceased to live. It was reported that Richard had fallen in gallant but hopeless resistance against nine ruffians appointed to dispatch him, a tale which has only lately been controverted by the examination of the monarch's skull by Gough,* who decides that he could not have been killed by a blow from a pole-axe on the back of the head, the mode by which it was said that he was at last overpowered, there being no mark of violence to support the assertion; therefore though reluctantly we are compelled to relinquish the picturesque story adopted by Shakspeare, of the last and desperate struggle which Richard the Second made in opposition to a host of assailants ere he was hacked to death in "Pomfret's bloody prison." In addition to the different accounts respecting the ill-fated monarch's

* Sepulchral Monuments.

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It must in candour be acknowledged that the arguments in favour of Henry's innocence of the murder of his rival have lately received much strength, and that a new light has been thrown upon Richard's mysterious fate by the very able examination of this interesting point by one of the most zealous and veracious historians of the present day.* It is confidently asserted in many of the old chronicles that the question of the expediency of putting Richard to death was formally debated in parliament, and that it was at last resolved that he should only be permitted to exist while his friends remained quiescent; but upon the first revolt of his party the struggle should be terminated by the captive monarch's execution. The rolls of parliament do not record this cold-blooded discussion, but merely state that "the lords would by all means that the life of the king should be saved;" and for the honour of human nature we may hope that there was no foundation for the report, more especially as Henry might have pleaded the sanction of parliament in extenuation of his own conduct: but it is very confidently stated that a petition was presented to the

* Nicholas Harris Nicolas, Esq. F.S.A. See Cause of the Death of Richard II. examined, *Vol. 93 of the Gentleman's Magazine.*

king by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duke of York and others, praying him to secure the quiet of the realm by the death of his deposed rival; and that Henry urged to this act of self-defence by his friends, and justly alarmed by the discovery of the conspiracy against him, dispatched Sir Piers Exton to Pomfret castle with orders for the assassination of the royal prisoner. The King received the first intelligence of the insurrection in Richard's favour upon the first Sunday in January 1400, supposed to be the fourth of that month, and the death of the captive monarch did not take place until the thirteenth or fourteenth of the following February. It is upon these dates that Henry's powerful advocate founds his arguments, and that they are very conclusive no impartial reader will deny; but although we may admit that if Henry had determined upon Richard's death at the moment of extreme peril to himself, the execution of this dire purpose would scarcely have been delayed for so long a period, and the crime perpetrated at last when the rebellion was quelled and all danger to the reigning monarch at an end, yet neither these extenuating circumstances nor the current report stated by Creton that Richard vexed at heart by the evil intelligence of Salisbury's defeat, "neither ate nor drank from that hour," can entirely remove the unfavourable impression made by Henry's culpable negligence of the means whereby he might have repelled every aspersion of his enemies. The public examination of all those persons about Pomfret castle, or who had the immediate custody of the king as suggested by Mr.

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CHAP. V. Webb, would have placed the question at rest for ever; and at the risk of incurring the charge of tedious repetition it must again be said that, in rejecting this mode of exculpation Henry compromised his own reputation; and that the manner of Richard's death, to use the mildest term, must still remain a doubt upon the mind of the most diligent inquirer in the search of truth.

CHAPTER VI.

Splendour of Richard's court—Progress of Luxury, Love of Dress—Curious Habiliment of John of Ghent—Distinguishing marks of Nobility at Henry IV.'s Coronation—Stow's philippic on Piked Shoes—Knighton's description of Female Attire—Costly Furniture—Profuse style of the Lady de Courcy—The Duke of Lancaster's Plate—emblazoned Coat and Coverlet—The Reign of Chivalry—Magnificent Tournament—Curious Ceremonial—Foreign Knights attracted to the Tilt—The Procession—Jousts and Banquets—Arrival of Count d'Ostrevant—Award of the Prizes—Continuation of the Tilting—Decision of the Ladies, Lords, and Heralds—The Jousts of the Squires—Feast at the Bishop's Palace—The Court adjourn to Windsor—Gallantry of Sir John Holand—The Letter of Sir Reginald de Roye—Dialogue between the Duke of Lancaster and Sir John Holand—Gifts to the Herald—Speech of the King of Portugal—Skill and Prowess of Sir John Holand—Speech of the Duke of Lancaster—The Proclamation of three French Knights—Ardour of Sir John Holand—Tournament at Saint Inglevere—Sir John Holand runs Six Courses—Incognito of the King of France—Tilts during the truce between England and Scotland—Gallantry of Earl Crawford—Character and Accomplishments of Sir John Arundel—his Licentiousness and Barbarity—Outrages committed by Knights—Entertainment of the Court—Chaucer and Gower—Anecdote of King Richard and the latter—Poetical Talents of the Earl of Salisbury—Froissart's Interview with the King—Richard's Present to Froissart—Great Success of Wickliffe's Doctrines—their Decline under the House of Lancaster—Magnificence of the Royal Establishment—Splendid Possessions of Sir John Arundel—of the Earl of Gloucester—of the Earl of Wiltshire—and of the Earl of Salisbury—Brutality of Manners—Character and Conduct of the Scottish Nation—Curious Predicament of Sir John de Vienne—Richard's

Campaign in Ireland—Anecdote of Five Kings—Whittington—probable Origin of his Wealth—Percie's Tale of the Cat—circumstances respecting its Adoption in England—Character of Sir John Philpot—his splendid Services—A Warlike Bishop—Penance of Sir Thomas Erpingham.

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FEW courts have excelled that of Richard II. in pomp and magnificence. The monarch inherited the inordinate attachment to glitter and parade which had distinguished his predecessors, and equalled if he could not surpass the splendour of former sovereigns. It would have been difficult to outvie in richness and in extravagance the attire of the great and noble in preceding years; but the late conquests in France had introduced superior elegance and refinement, while the plunder acquired by the soldiery disseminated throughout the whole community luxuries hitherto exclusively confined to the higher ranks. The sumptuary laws passed in the reign of Edward III. were disregarded. Fashions from proud Italy, courtly France and imperial Germany were imported into England and followed with equal avidity by all classes. "The vanity of the common people in their dress," says Knighton, "was so great, that it was impossible to distinguish the rich from the poor, the high from the low, the clergy from the laity, by their appearance."

Cloth of gold, satin and velvet, enriched by the florid decorations of the needle, were insufficient to satisfy the pride of nobles; robes formed of these costly materials were frequently ornamented with embroidery of goldsmith's work, thickly set with precious stones; and the most absurd and fantastic

habits were continually adopted, in the restless desire to appear in new inventions.* John of Ghent is represented in a habit divided straight down the middle, one side white, the other half dark blue; and his son Henry IV. on his return from exile, rode in procession through London in a jacket of cloth-of-gold, "after the German fashion."† The dukes and earls who attended his coronation wore three bars of ermine on the left arm, a quarter of a yard long, "or thereabouts;" the barons had but two: and over the monarch's head was borne a canopy of blue silk supported by silver staves with four gold bells "that rang at the corners." "Early in the reign of Richard II. began" says Stow, "the detestable use of piked shoes, tied to the knees with chains of silver gilt; also women used high attire on their heads with piked horns and long training gowns. The commons also were besotted in excesse of apparel; in wide surcoates reaching to their loines; some in a garment reaching to their heels close before and strowting out at the sides, so that on the backe they make men seeme women, and this they called by a ridiculous name *gowne*.‡ Their hoodes

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* Strutt. † Froissart.

‡ This "strowting out" of the male garments "at the sides," and the effeminate figure of this costume altogether had its origin, there can be no reason to doubt, in Asiatic imitation. Whoever casts his eye upon the male dress of Persia, India, and generally of all the eastern countries, will see the models from which that described by Stow was copied. The same may be said of the whole style of dress, the profusion of ornament, and more especially fondness for the works of the goldsmith. The early devotion of human skill, guided by a taste for imitation and combination more or less fantastic, to the materials of silver, gold and gems, is notorious in Asia, and it passed thence to Constantinople, and into Italy and the rest of Europe. Imitations

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are little, tied under the chin, and buttoned like the women's, but set with gold, silver, and precious stones; the lirripippes, tippets which went round the neck and hung down before, reach to the heels, all jagged. They have another weede of silk, which they call a pallock, a close jacket like a waistcoat; and their hose are of two colours or pied." The apparel of the ladies was equally whimsical and extravagant. Knighton informs us that they appeared at tournaments in parti-coloured tunics, one half being of one colour and the other half of another; "their lirripippes or tippets very short; their cape remarkably little, and wrapt about their heads with cords; their girdles and pouches are ornamented with gold and silver, and they wear short swords called *daggers* before them: they are mounted on the finest horses and richest furniture." "Pearls and precious stones, and chains of gold, were the necessary appendages of female attire; and the garments of women of rank were frequently "bordered with gems." The ornaments of their apartments were in a style of similar expense, being hung with tapestry and cloth of arras and decked with the spoils of France, or with domestic manufactures in imitation of these foreign rarities in which, as well as in the lavish profusion of their establishments, the English were surpassed by their continental neighbours. The Lady De Coucy, governess to the young Queen Isabel the second wife of Richard II., is

of all natural forms were the pride of the luxurious artist; an illustration of which is found in the Asiatic allusion to the minute and complex branches and foliage of *moss*—so difficult to imitate in metal, that it has thence been called "the goldsmith's sorrow."

described* as emulating the magnificence of royalty in her style of living. Even the liberal and thoughtless monarch was astonished at the extravagance of her household, and directed that an inquiry should be instituted on the subject. "She lives," said one of the persons thus delegated to seek information, "in greater splendour one thing with another than the queen; for she has eighteen horses by your order, besides the livery of her husband, whenever she comes and goes; and keeps two or three goldsmiths, seven or eight embroiderers, two or three cutlers, and two or three furriers, as well as you or the queen." CHAP. VI.

The nobles in Richard's time were possessed of gold and silver plate in vast abundance. We are told that the valuable property of this description, which fell into the hands of the populace at the sacking of the Duke of Lancaster's palace in the Savoy, would have filled five carts. A coat of state is likewise mentioned, so richly emblazoned with solid ornaments of gold and jewels that it was literally hacked to pieces before it could be destroyed; and even a more vivid idea of the luxuries of the duke's residence may be conveyed from the account of Stow, who assures us that a coverlet which shared the general doom pronounced upon John of Ghent's effects was estimated at a thousand marks. The armour and accoutrements of a knight were amazingly superb and costly, and immense sums were expended on the preparations for the performance of feats of arms, the favourite amusement of this warlike age.

* MS. Ambassades.

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Chivalry in England was now in the zenith of its glory, and the reign of Richard II. is celebrated for a brilliant tournament, the fame of which rang throughout the whole of Christendom. The king of England having heard of the gallant jousts held at Paris in honour of the entry of Queen Isabella, consort of Charles VI., resolved to equal or to surpass the splendour of the French court. It was therefore determined that sixty English knights who should be conducted to the lists by sixty noble ladies, should challenge all foreign knights. The preliminaries were settled with infinite care. "The sixty knights were to tilt for two days; that is to say, on the Sunday after Michaelmas day, and on the following Monday." But Froissart has given all the particulars of this tournament with his usual minute attention to these chivalric achievements; he informs us that "the sixty knights were to set out at two o'clock in the afternoon from the tower of London with their ladies, and parade through the streets down Cheapside to a large square called Smithfield. There the knights were to wait on the Sunday the arrival of any foreign knights who might be desirous of tilting, and the feast of the Sunday was to be called the feast of the challengers. The same ceremonies were to take place on the Monday, and the sixty knights to be prepared for tilting courteously with blunted lances against all comers. The prize for the best knight of the opponents was to be a rich crown of gold; that for the tenants of the lists a very rich golden clasp; they were to be awarded to the most gallant tilter according to the judgment of the ladies who would be present with

the queen of England and the great barons as spectators.

"On the Tuesday the tournaments were to be continued by squires against others of the same rank who wished to oppose them. The prize for the opponents was a courser saddled and bridled, and for the tenants of the list a falcon. The manner of holding this feast being settled, heralds were sent to proclaim it throughout England, Scotland, Hainault, Germany, Flanders and France. It was ordered by the council to what parts each herald was to go, and having time before hand they published it in most countries.

"Many knights and squires," continues our author, "made preparations to attend it, some to see the manners of the English, others to take part in the tournament. On the feast being made known in Hainault, Sir William de Hainault Count d'Ostrevant, who was at that time young and gallant and fond of tilting, determined in his own mind to be present and to honour and make acquaintance with his cousin king Richard and his uncles, whom he had never seen. He therefore engaged many knights and squires to accompany him.

"The Sunday, according to proclamation being the next to Michaelmas day, was the beginning of the tiltings and called the feast of the challengers. About three o'clock there paraded out from the tower of London sixty barbed coursers ornamented for the tournament, on each was mounted a squire of honour that advanced only at a foot pace. Then came sixty ladies of rank 'having' says Baker, 'their arms and apparel garnished with white harts

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and collars of gold about their necks, mounted on white palfreys most elegantly and richly dressed, every one leading a knight by a silver chain completely armed for tilting; and in this procession they moved on through the streets of London attended by numbers of minstrels and trumpets to Smithfield.

"The queen of England with her damsels were already arrived and placed in chambers handsomely decorated. The king was with the queen when the ladies who led the knights arrived in the square, their servants were ready to assist them to dismount from their palfreys, and to conduct them to apartments prepared for them.

"The knights remained until their squires of honour had dismounted and brought them their coursers, which having mounted they had their helmets laced on and prepared themselves in all points for the tilt.

"The Count de Saint Pol with his companions now advanced handsomely armed for the occasion, and the tournament began. Every foreign knight who pleased tilted or had time for so doing before the evening set in. The tiltings were continued with great spirit until night obliged the combatants to break off, and the queen retired to her lodgings in the bishop's palace near St. Paul's church where the banquet was held.

"Towards evening the Count d'Ostrevant arrived and was kindly received by king Richard and his lords. The prize for the opponents was adjudged to the Count de Saint Pol as the best knight at the tournament, and that for the tenants

to the Earl of Huntingdon. The dancings were at the queen's residence, in the presence of the king his uncles, and the baron of England. CHAP. VI.

"You would have seen," adds the lively narrator, "on the following morning, Monday, squires and varlets busily employed in different parts of London furbishing and making ready armour and horses for their masters who were to engage in the jousts.

"In the afternoon king Richard entered Smithfield magnificently accompanied by dukes, earls and knights, for he was chief of the tenants of the lists. The queen with the ladies took her station as on the preceding day. The Count d'Ostrevant came next with a large company of knights and squires fully armed for tilting; then the Count de Saint Pol and the knights from France.

"The tournament now began, and every one exerted himself to the utmost, many were unhorsed and more lost their helmets, and the jousting was continued with great courage and perseverance until night put an end to it. At the hour of supper the lords and ladies attended the banquet of the queen which was splendid and well served. The prize for the opponents at the tournament was adjudged by the ladies, lords and heralds, to the Count d'Ostrevant who far eclipsed all who tilted that day; that for the tenants was given to a gallant knight of England called Sir Hugh Spencer.

"On the morrow, Tuesday, the tournament was renewed by the squires who tilted in the presence of the king, queen, and all the nobles until night, when all retired as on the preceding day. The supper was as magnificent as before at the palace of the

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bishop where the king and queen lodged, and the dancing lasted until day break, when the company broke up.

"The tournament was continued on the Wednesday by all knights and squires indiscriminately, who were inclined to joust; it lasted until night, and the supper and dancings were as the preceding day. On Thursday the king entertained at supper all the foreign knights and squires, and the queen their ladies and damsels. The Duke of Lancaster gave a grand dinner to them on the Friday. On Saturday the king and his court left London for Windsor accompanied by the Count d'Ostrevant, the Count de Saint Pol, and all the foreign knights who had been present at the feasts."

Sir John Holand Earl of Huntingdon, so often mentioned in the history of the reign of Richard II. who carried off the first prize of the challengers, was famed throughout the Christian world for his feats of arms: when in Spain with his father-in-law the Duke of Lancaster, a herald arrived at his quarters bearing a letter from Sir Reginald de Roye, a gallant French knight in the service of the King of Castille, in which he entreated him "for the love of his mistress that he would deliver him from his vow by tilting with him three courses with the lance, three attacks with the sword, three with the battle-axe, and three with the dagger." Sir Reginald courteously offered his antagonist the choice of ground; he invited him to repair to Valladolid under the escort of sixty spears; but if it were more agreeable for him to remain at Entença he desired he would obtain from the Duke of Lancaster a passport

for himself and thirty companions. Froissart informs us, that "when Sir John Holand had perused this letter, he smiled, and looking at the herald said, 'Friend, thou art welcome, for thou hast brought me what pleases me much, and I accept the challenge. Thou wilt remain in my lodging with my people, and in the course of to-morrow thou shalt have my answer whether the tilts are to be in Gallicia or Castille.' The herald replied, 'God grant it.' Sir John went to the Duke of Lancaster and shewed the letter the herald had brought. 'Well,' said the duke, 'and have you accepted it?' 'Yes, by my faith have I; and why not? I love nothing better than fighting, and the knight entreats me to indulge him; consider therefore where you would choose it should take place.'"

The Duke of Lancaster decided upon Entença, and Sir John Holand when he delivered his answer to the herald presented him with a handsome mantle lined with minever and twelve nobles.

"News of this tournament," says Froissart, "was carried to Oporto, where the King of Portugal kept his court. 'In the name of God,' said the king, 'I will be present at it, and so shall my queen and the ladies.'"

Sir John Holand* gained infinite honour by his

* The combat between these valiant knights was attended with considerable danger, "it was to include every thing," says Froissart, "except pushing it to extremity, though no one could foresee what mischief might happen, nor how it would end; for they were to tilt with pointed lances, then with swords, which were so sharp scarcely a helmet could resist their strokes; and these were to be succeeded by battle-axes and daggers, each so well tempered that nothing could withstand them. Now," adds our author, "consider the perils those run who engage in such combats to exalt their honour, for one unlucky stroke puts an end to the business."

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gallantry in these jousts, more especially as many of the spectators were of opinion that Sir Reginald de Roye had not strictly complied with the law of arms in the manner of bracing his helmet, which fastened only by one thong offered slight resistance to the lance of his adversary. The Duke of Lancaster with honourable impartiality upheld the cause of the stranger: in answer to the observations of the knights around him he said, "he considered that man as wise who in combat knew how to seize his vantage;" adding, that "Sir Reginald de Roye was not now to learn how to tilt."

At another time Sir John Holand distinguished himself on the plain of Inglevere near Calais, where during a truce more strictly observed between France and England than so short a suspension of hostilities was wont to be, three French knights, namely Sir Boucicaut the younger, Lord Reginald de Roye, and the Lord de Saimpi undertook to maintain the lists against all comers for the space of thirty days. This tournament had been proclaimed in many countries, and particularly in England, where it aroused the martial spirit of men delighting in chivalric adventures. "I will name," says Froissart, "those who were most eager to engage in the jousts. The first was Sir John Holand Earl of Huntingdon, Sir John Courtenay and many more to the amount of upwards of one hundred, who said they would be blame-worthy if they did not cross the sea when the distance was so short to Calais, pay a visit to those knights and tilt with them. 'Let us prepare ourselves to attend this tournament; for these French knights only hold it that they may have our company:

it is well done, and shews they do not want courage: let us not disappoint them.' Sir John Holand," continues our author, "was the first to cross the sea," and he was also the first to touch the shields of the challengers. The tournament was held at the beginning of "the charming month of May," on a smooth green plain near the monastery of Saint Inglevere; and close to the lists were erected three elegant vermilion-coloured pavilions, from whence when summoned by the stroke of a spear upon the war-target which richly emblazoned with the arms of the proprietors were suspended in front, each knight issued forth completely armed. Sir John Holand tilted successively with Sir Boucicaut and the Lord de Saimpi, and was very desirous to break another lance "in honour of his lady," but this was not permitted; "he had run his six courses," says Froissart, "with such ability and courage as gained him praise from all sides," and he was now obliged to retire from the lists to give others an opportunity of displaying their prowess. The King of France was present in disguise as a spectator at these jousts, which were carried on with untiring vigour for several days.

Many gallant tilts took place between the English and Scottish knights during the peace with Scotland in 1396,* the nobles of each country manifesting an honourable anxiety to uphold the national glory. Warlike deeds usually engrossed the conversation in these chivalrous times: after the first day's tournament at Inglevere, the English are represented by Froissart as enjoying themselves at Calais, and

* Stow.

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"talking over the feats of arms that had been performed;" and Stow tells us, that when the Lord Welles visited Scotland as ambassador from Richard II., being present at a solemn banquet where the guests in "communing" upon a subject so interesting to a warrior's ear, discussed the contending claims for superiority between the rival countries, the southern knight haughtily exclaimed, "Let wordes have no place; if ye know not the chivalry and valiant deedes of Englishmen, appoint me a day and a place where ye list and ye shall have experience." The challenge was instantly accepted by David Earl of Crauford, who named St. George's day for the time, and Lord Welles chose the bridge of London for the scene of action. The earl arrived in the English capital previous to the appointed time attended by a train of thirty persons handsomely equipped: the combatants were conveyed to the ground with the usual ceremonies, and at the sound of the trumpets "ran hastily together on their barbed horses with square-grounded spears to the death." The Scottish knight sustained the shock of his adversary's lance at the first course so unshrinkingly, that the spectators moved with a vain suspicion, cried "Earl David contrary to the law of arms is bound to the saddle." The knight hearing this murmur instantly sprang from his horse, and in another moment without the slightest assistance vaulted again into the saddle. Armed with fresh spears the ardent combatants "rushed on each other," says the historian, "with burning ire to conquer honour." * The third course proved

* Stow.

decisive, and the triumph was decreed to the stranger, who struck his lance with such skill and force against his adversary that he unhorsed him with the well-aimed thrust; and Lord Welles fell powerless to the ground. Earl Crauford now convinced the admiring crowd that his valour was only surpassed by his courtesy; he dismounted hastily from his steed, ran to the wounded knight and tenderly embraced him, "that the people might understand he fought with no hatred but only for the glory of victory." Nor did his humane attentions rest here, he visited the sick couch of his opponent every day, and did not leave England until Lord Welles was completely restored to health.

Amid those English knights conspicuous for their skill and valour, and who are described as shining at tournaments, was the accomplished but odiously profligate Sir John Arundel. Next to courage and dexterity in feats of arms, the acquirements most dearly prized in the dissipated reign of Richard II. were those of singing and dancing, in both of which Arundel excelled; but neither the gentle laws of chivalry, nor the refinement of music's enchanting art, could soften or subdue the savage nature of this brutal knight: his deeds are still more revolting than those of Sir John Holand, and after a career of vicious extravagance he perished miserably in a storm off the coast of Ireland, in the command of an expedition which the king had dispatched to the assistance of the Duke of Bretagne. Previous to their embarkation on this fatal voyage, the conduct of Arundel and his companions is described to have been frightfully dissolute: they

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carried off the wives and daughters of the inhabitants of Portsmouth, where their fleet was preparing, and forced them on board their ships; profaned the sanctuary of a neighbouring convent, and in despite of the tears and entreaties of the lady abbess, broke open the gates and committed the most frightful outrages within the holy walls. Many of the nuns* who are stated to have been allied to the first families in the kingdom were also taken out to sea by these lawless soldiers. "And yet," says the justly indignant Holinshed, "when the tempest rose, like cruel and unmerciful persons, they threw them into the sea, eyther for that they would not be troubled with their lamentable noyse and crying, or for that they thought so long as they had such women aboard with them, God would not cease the rage of the tempest." Such were the deeds which disgraced chivalry in its brightest æra, and the gallant knight who dazzled the world by his valour and courtesy in the field was not unfrequently the unblushing author of atrocities which would reflect discredit on the most unpolished age. It is painful to be compelled to tear away the glowing veil with which poetical imaginations have invested the days of chivalry and romance; but it is the province of the faithful historian to remove those pleasing illusions connected with the annals of warriors renowned for their knightly accomplishments: instead of being the redressers of grievances, the friends of defenceless women, and the bold protectors of the oppressed, we find them the scourge and terror of the weak, the spoilers of helpless innocence, contemners of the

* Walsingham.

law, and indulging their avarice or their revenge in rapine and in murder.

In addition to the "dances and carollings" in which Richard II. so greatly delighted, the court was entertained at certain seasons of the year with mummeries and disguisings, which Dr. Henry styles "the masquerades of the middle ages," and which he informs us were introduced in the reign of Henry III. In the roll of the wardrobe of King Richard II. there is an entry for twenty-one linen coifs for counterfeiting men of the law in the king's play at Christmas; and besides these amusements, the nobility employed their leisure hours in various games of skill or chance: cards were invented towards the close of the fourteenth century, by Jaquemin Gringonneur, a painter in Paris; and previous to their appearance in England of which little mention is made until the year 1463, when there was an act passed to prohibit their importation from France, dice were the chief instruments used for the gratification of those gambling propensities which have prevailed in nearly every country and every age.

The period of Richard II. was the era of Chaucer, who in the preceding reign opened a new and wide field of poetry to the wondering eyes of his admiring countrymen. It would be doing great injustice to the merits of this incomparable writer, to notice him merely by a brief eulogium, and yet the nature of a work embracing so large a portion of English history will scarcely admit of more than a slight tribute to the genius of this mighty master of his art, even if the author felt competent to descant upon the various excellencies of so bright a star in

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the dark night of English literature. At the bare mention of Chaucer's name a thousand beautiful images spring up, the procession, the tournament, and the chace, pass in review before the delighted gaze; and in examining the splendid picture more closely, we find every gem, every leaf, and every flower, the most minute and trifling accessories, painted with equal truth and vigour with the bolder and more striking ornaments. The poet's delineation of manners and of feelings is equally felicitous: from the splendid palace to the peasant's straw-roofed shed, he has drawn forth a multitude of personages of every rank and class in the community, and given appropriate language and sentiments to each; and with a delicacy of versification hitherto unknown, and touches of true pathos which no preceding poet ever attained, he has mingled descriptions of natural scenery so magnificent and sublime, and has burst forth into such lofty strains of eloquence, that it is impossible to select from such boundless variety any one passage which could convey more than a faint idea of the exquisite productions of this illustrious bard. Gower, the contemporary and the friend of Chaucer, though not gifted with the fertile imagination, the spirit, or the elegance of his tuneful rival, was a splendid ornament to the age in which he flourished: his classic acquirements were very considerable, and his attention was early devoted to the improvement of his native language, which, polished and refined by his patriotic labours, was no longer deemed too harsh and barbarous for the grace and melody of song. The taste for poetry and romance which since the revival of literature

by the Troubadours, had characterized the English, was strengthened by the compositions of "the lively Chaucer," and "the moral Gower;" both of these admirable writers were the ornaments of the court, the companions and the favourites of the nobility: the former by his connection with his patron, John of Ghent, through Alice Swynford, the sister of the poet, and the third Duchess of Lancaster; the latter from his birth, which entitled him to rank with the most honourable families in the kingdom. Sir John Gower enjoyed the sunshine of royal favour from Richard II., by whose command he wrote an English poem, in eight books, entitled, the Lover's Confession. "The king* meeting the poet rowing on the Thames near London, invited him into the royal barge, and after much conversation requested him to *book some new thing*."

The poems of Richard's most esteemed friend and favourite minister, the Earl of Salisbury, are unfortunately lost; but we have the authority of Christina of Pisa, a lady celebrated in the annals of French literature, between whom and the earl a mutual admiration appears to have subsisted, to conclude that they were worthy of his talents and accomplishments. She used to call him "*Grácieux chevalier, aiment dictier, et lui-même grácieux dicteur*."

The warm attachment of the weak but elegantly minded Richard to letters is supported by many proofs, in the choice of his companions; the number of minstrels who formed a part of his retinue, and his patronage of the learned. Froissart has preserved

* Warton's History of English Poetry.

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an interesting account of the manner in which the king received a volume of romances presented by the historian in his last visit to England. Richard, it appears, scrupulously maintained his royal dignity and estate, and was somewhat difficult of access; the faces of the English courtiers were strange to Froissart, who had been familiar with all the nobles and knights in the time of Edward III., but at length meeting with an old acquaintance he was introduced to the Duke of York, and presented by him to the king. Richard received the historian in his bedchamber, and laid the book on his bed. "He opened it," continues our author, "and looked into it with much pleasure. He ought to have been pleased, for it was handsomely written, and illuminated and bound in crimson velvet with ten silver gilt studs, and roses of the same in the middle, with two large clasps of silver gilt richly worked with roses in the centre. The king asked me what the book treated of: I replied, "Of love." He was pleased with the answer, and dipped into several places reading parts aloud, for he read and spoke French perfectly well, and then gave it to one of his knights to carry to his oratory, and made me many acknowledgments." On the departure of Froissart, the king presented him with a silver gilt goblet "weighing full two marcs," and filled with one hundred nobles, "which," says the narrator, "were then of service to me and will be as long as I live." Richard himself is not destitute of some pretensions to the poetic garland, he has obtained a place in the catalogue of royal authors, upon the authority of a French manuscript in the Harleian collection entitled

Histoire du Roy d'Angleterre Richard; the writer after descanting with much eloquence upon the virtues and accomplishments of the monarch, says, CHAP. VI.

"Et si faisont balades et chançons
Rondeaulx et laiz
Tres bien et bel: si hestoit il que homs lais."

A letter from Sir Robert Cotton to Archbishop Usher is also adduced in support of Richard's claims to the rank of an author, the knight requests his correspondent to procure for him a poem by Richard II. which he had pointed out.

Richard's love of the peaceful arts, and the religious toleration, of which it is possible his indifference to spiritual concerns might be the source, held out a delusive prospect of emancipation from the bigotry and ignorance of preceding ages. Although the king was generally surrounded by the dignitaries of the church, he displayed no friendly spirit towards the great body of the clergy; he oppressed them with heavy exactions, held more than one parliament in religious houses, to the serious discomfiture of the monks, violated their privileges whenever it suited his own convenience, and contented himself, when recalled from his first expedition to Ireland by the complaints of the priesthood against the intemperate zeal of the Wickliffites, with merely threatening the reformers with banishment. He selected however three saints from the calendar for the objects of his particular veneration, Saint John the Baptist, King Edmund, and Edward the Confessor. The opposition in Richard's reign of the clergy to the new doctrines preached by Wickliffe was so

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weakly supported by the government, that we learn on the authority of a contemporary historian* of great credit that more than half of the people of England were his disciples. The opinions of the reformers had penetrated the court, the church and the universities; in the great towns of London, Leicester and Bristol they were cherished with avidity; and according to Knyghton a man would scarcely meet with two persons on the road without one of them being a Wickliffite. The laws and edicts against the profession of heretical tenets were but slowly and faintly executed, "because," observes our author, "the time of correction was not yet come."

Wickliffe had translated the Bible into the English language, and thus opened the perusal of the Scriptures to all who could read their native tongue: but the progress both of the reformed religion and of literature received a fatal check in the dark and troublesome years which succeeded Richard's deposition. Henry of Lancaster lent his authority to persecution, and incessantly employed in maintaining the throne against the numerous conspiracies and rebellions which threatened its destruction, though better qualified than his unfortunate predecessor to become a patron of the fine arts, had little leisure to attend to affairs of less consequence than the cares of his government. Learning degenerated in the reign of Henry IV. and in that of his warlike son, the mass of the people intimidated by the dreadful examples of the enmity of the Church of Rome towards those who presumed to reject its dogmas,

* Knyghton.

were deterred from the perusal of the works which had formerly been industriously circulated by Wickliffe's disciples: such prohibited books were diligently sought after, and all who "transcribed, sold, bought, or concealed them," were liable to heavy penalties. It was the policy of the clergy of the established church to keep their flocks in ignorance, and thus discouraged from the pursuit of knowledge they relapsed into their former negligence; and the dawn which had opened so brightly under Richard II. was quickly obscured by clouds and darkness.

No European monarch entertained a more splendid retinue than Richard II. "His royalty was such," says Stow,* "that wheresoever he lay his person was guarded by two hundred Cheshire men; he had about him thirteen bishops, besides barons, knights and squires, and others more than needed; insomuch that to the household came every day to meat ten thousand people, as appeared by the messes told out of the kitchen by three hundred servitors." And the same author tells us that in 1399 the king kept "a most royal Christmas at Westminster Hall, with daily joustings and runnings at tilt, whereunto resorted such a number of people that there was every day spent twenty-eight or twenty-sixe oxen, and three hundred sheep, besides fowle without number." This magnificence was imitated by the nobles. Holinshed tells us that the furniture and apparel of Sir John Arundel was "very sumptuous, and that it was thought to surmount the apparel of any king." He had fifty-two new suits of cloth of gold, and

* Survey of London.

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horses and other effects to the value of ten thousand marks which were lost at the period of his shipwreck. Thomas Despencer Earl of Gloucester possessed "fifty-nine lordships in sundry counties; twenty-eight thousand sheep, one thousand oxen and steers,* one thousand and two hundred kine, with their calves, forty mares with their colts of two years, one hundred and sixty draught horses, two thousand hogs, three thousand bullocks, forty tons of wine, six hundred bacons, fourscore carcasses of Martinmas beef, six hundred muttons in his larder, ten tons of cider, armour, plate, jewels, and ready money better than ten thousand pounds, thirty-six sacks of wool, and a library of books." William Scroope Earl of Wiltshire, in order to atone for an outrage committed against the Bishop of Durham, made an offering of a jewel to the shrine of Saint Cuthbert of the value of five hundred pounds, and the rich tapestry belonging to the Earl of Salisbury was thought a present worthy of a king's son. Upon forfeiture of his property three pieces were given to Prince Thomas of Lancaster, by a grant from Henry IV.

The improvement in manners did not keep pace with the rapid advance of luxury, and the preceding pages bear but too convincing evidence of the low state of morals. The highest and the noblest personages in the realm disgraced themselves by ruffian brutality of conduct. On one memorable occasion the Duke of Gloucester dared to insult the king by bursting into his presence with his sword drawn, and declaring with an oath that he would murder the first man who should venture to accuse his brother

* Dugdale.

John of Ghent of treason. Henry Bolingbroke's language and demeanour is represented by Richard to have been not less rude and violent. The monarch in those piercing lamentations wrung from his despairing spirit, when betrayed into the toils set by his crafty kinsman, in summing up the offences of which Henry of Lancaster had been guilty towards him, exclaims, "Once he drew upon me in the chamber of the queen;" an act of insolence unparalleled even in the history of Simon de Montfort, so justly held up to the indignation of the civilized world for the savage insult offered to his sovereign Henry III. The threatening gesticulations which accompanied the loud cries of "liar" and "traitor" resounding through Westminster-Hall at the opening of the first parliament under Henry IV., prove how little scrupulous the peers of England were respecting the style of their remonstrances to each other, when their angry passions were excited: their actions were equally indicative of cruelty and barbarism. Richard himself, though described as far exceeding the nobles of his court in refinement, is said to have glutted his eyes with the bloody scene of the decollation of his enemy Richard Fitzalan Earl of Arundel; the monarch's example was, we are told by Baker, followed by divers noblemen who crowded to witness the sanguinary spectacle. Mowbray Earl of Nottingham has been represented as performing a conspicuous part in the dismal tragedy; but a modern historian in suggesting the necessity of his absence at Calais in charge of his prisoner the Duke of Gloucester, at the period in which Arundel suffered, has wiped the stigma from his name; he is accused by Walsingham with assisting to bind the

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eyes of the condemned earl, with whom he was closely connected by marriage, being the husband of his daughter. The actual presence of another near relative, the Earl of Kent, has not been disproved. Baker informs us that Arundel rebuked him from the scaffold for his heartless conduct in these prophetic words, "Truly it would have beseemed you rather to be absent than here at this business; but the time will come ere long, that as many shall marvel at your misfortune as they do now at mine."*

The English people notwithstanding the low state of civilization were refined in comparison with the rugged brutality of their northern neighbours, who had not yet emerged from the most savage barbarism. The lively pen of Froissart affords a spirited sketch of the conduct and manners of the Scots, as narrated by Sir John de Vienne the constable, and other nobles and knights of France, who had the misfortune to be dispatched by Charles VI. in 1385 to aid them in their intended invasion of England. Vienne, accompanied by a thousand men at arms, and laden with a subsidy of forty thousand francs of gold, together with armour and accoutrements for a thousand knights and esquires, sailed from the fair and jocund fields of France to a barren and inhospitable region, where in despite of his errand and the glittering treasure he conveyed, he experienced a very indifferent reception. Froissart tells us that "news was soon spread through Scotland that a large body of men at arms were arrived in the country; some began to murmur and to say, "what devil has brought them here, or who has sent for

* Chronicle of Kings.

them? Cannot we carry on our wars with England without their assistance? We shall never do any effectual good so long as they are with us. Let them be told to return again, for we are numerous enough in Scotland to fight our own quarrels, and do not want their company; we neither understand their language nor they ours, and we cannot converse together. They will very soon eat up and destroy all we have in this country, and will do us more harm if we allow them to remain amongst us than the English would in battle. If the English burn our houses what consequence is it to us, we can rebuild them cheaply enough, for we only require five or six days to do so, provided we have five or six poles and boughs to cover them." Such was the conversation of the Scots on the arrival of the French; they did not esteem them, but hated them in their hearts, and abused them with their tongues as much as they could, like rude and worthless people as they are. I must however say that, considering all things, it was not right for so many of the nobility to have come at this season to Scotland: it would have been better to have sent twenty or thirty knights from France than so large a body. The reason is clear. In Scotland you will never find a man of worth, they are like savages who wish not to be acquainted with any one, and are too envious of the good fortune of others and suspicious of losing any thing themselves; for their country is very poor. When the English make inroads thither, as they have very frequently done, they order their provisions, if they wish to live, to

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follow close at their back; for there is nothing to be had in the country without difficulty. There is neither iron to shoe horses nor leather to make harness, saddles, or bridles: all these things come ready made from Flanders by sea; and should these fail there is none to be had in the country. When these barons and knights of France who had been used to handsome hotels, ornamented apartments and castles, with good soft beds to repose on, saw themselves in such poverty, they began to laugh and say before the admiral, "What could have brought us hither? We have never known till now what poverty and hard living were? We have now found the truth of what our fathers and mothers used to tell us, when they said, 'Go, thou shalt have in thy time, shouldst thou live long enough, hard beds and poor lodgings.' All this is now come to pass." They said also among themselves, "Let us hasten the object of our voyage by advancing towards England. A long stay in Scotland will be neither honourable nor profitable." And stating their earnest desire to facilitate their departure from the comfortless region which afforded so few accommodations to Sir John de Vienne, he endeavoured to appease them, saying, "My fair Sirs, it becomes us to wait patiently, and to speak fair, as we have got into such difficulties. We have a long way yet to go, and we cannot return through England. Take in good humour whatever you can get, you cannot be always in Paris, Dijon, or Chalons: it is necessary for those who wish to live with honour in this world, to endure good and evil."

By these and similar speeches, the constable pacified his officers, and anxious to cultivate the friendship of his allies, he sought the acquaintance of the Scottish barons and knights; but," continues our author, "he was visited by so very few it is not worth mentioning; for, as I have said before, there are not many nobles there, and they are people difficult of access." The Earls of Douglas and Moray formed an honourable exception to the rest of their countrymen, and were the principal visitants of the French cavaliers, paying them more attention than they received from the whole remaining portion of the community. "But this," observes Froissart, "was not the worst, for the French were hardly dealt with in their purchases; and whenever they wanted to buy horses, they were asked for what was worth ten florins, sixty and a hundred; with difficulty could they be found at that price. When the horses had been bought, there were not any housings to be met with, except those which they had brought with them from Flanders.

"In this situation were the French: besides whenever their servants went out to forage, they were indeed permitted to load their horses with as much as they could pack up and carry, but they were waylaid on their return and villainously beaten, robbed, and sometimes slain, insomuch that no varlet dared go out foraging for fear of death."

The representations made by Sir John de Vienne and his knights to the King of Scotland, respecting the expedience of a speedy commencement of the campaign were of little avail; not an individual in the monarch's council would stir until he had

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received a share of the gold which Charles had sent for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the war; and when at length the French knights were admitted to an audience with the king, they were disgusted with his person and his manner, and convinced by his "red bleared eyes, the colour of sandal-wood, that he was no valiant man." After much delay the constable persuaded the Scots to accompany him across the English border, and ravaging a part of Northumberland, their allied forces were compelled to make a hasty retreat by the approach of Richard II. at the head of eighty thousand men.

Upon their return to the lowlands, which had been traversed by the English in their sweeping march to the Scottish capital, they found the whole country in ruins; but the inhabitants made light of the devastation, observing, that with the assistance of six or eight stakes they should soon have new houses, and they could re-stock their farms with the cattle which had been driven into the forests for security. Having no farther hope of obtaining booty from England the Scots very successfully endeavoured to pillage their allies. "Whatever," says Froissart, "the French wanted to buy they were compelled to pay very dearly for; and it was fortunate that the French and the Scots did not quarrel with each other very seriously, as there were frequent riots on account of provisions. The Scots said that the French had done them more mischief than the English, and when asked in what manner, they replied by riding through their corn and barley on their horses, which they trod under

foot, not condescending to follow the roads, for which damages they would have a recompense before they left Scotland, and they should neither find vessel or mariner who would dare put to sea without their permission."

Upon the return of Sir John de Vienne and his troops to the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, the whole party suffered severely from famine; provisions being scarcely to be procured for money, they could obtain but a very small quantity of the necessaries of life, either for themselves or their horses; many of the latter perished from want of food, or were completely worn out by fatigue, and when on account of the difficulty in the maintenance of those who were in a better condition their owners wished to sell them, not a purchaser was to be found who would give a "groat" either for the horses or their housings.

The situation of the French knights became every day more irksome and distressing, and in consequence of the gloomy prospect before them, many petitioned for leave to return home, being justly alarmed at the idea of spending the winter in a place productive of so little comfort: they deemed it impossible from the general scarcity to exist in a body, and expressed their fears lest in the event of their being obliged to spread themselves over the country, they should meet with treatment similar to that which had befallen their foragers, and be set upon and murdered.

The constable though exceedingly anxious to remain in Scotland until spring, in order that he might with the assistance of a reinforcement of

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stores, money and provisions, make another attempt upon England, was convinced of the reasonableness of the statement made by his officers: and perceiving how inimical the Scots were to their allies, and the perilous situation in which himself and his followers were placed, gave permission for the departure of those who were desirous to quit their miserable quarters. But here a fresh difficulty arose: the Scots faithful to their threat of detaining their visitors until they had been remunerated for all their alleged losses opposed the wishes of the French nobles, telling them that their dependants were welcome to leave the country whenever they pleased, but that they themselves should not embark until they had complied with every demand which might be brought against them. In this dilemma Sir John de Vienne, convinced of the impracticability of acting in concert with such insatiate plunderers, relinquished his designs upon England, and studied only how to make the best terms for himself and his friends with the mercenary people who treated them as if they were enemies rather than allies.

Extremely perplexed he applied to the Earls of Douglas and Moray, who represented to their countrymen the disgraceful nature of their conduct, telling them that they did not act becoming men at arms nor as friends to the kingdom of France by this behaviour to its knights, and that henceforward no Scottish knight would dare to set his foot in France; but these nobles having exerted their influence in vain, advised the constable to purchase the consent of the rapacious multitude to the departure of his followers at their own price, and Sir John

finding all other means unavailable, made himself responsible for the alleged injuries sustained by the Scots from his army, and in a proclamation declared his readiness to satisfy all those who should shew just cause of complaint. Upon this concession many knights and esquires obtained a passage to France, or returned through Flanders, or wherever they could land, famished and without arms or horses, cursing Scotland and the hour of their visit to its rugged shores; they declared that they had never suffered so much, in any previous expedition, and expressed an earnest wish that the King of France would make a truce with the English for two or three years and then march to Scotland and utterly destroy it, "for never had they seen such wicked people, nor such ignorant hypocrites and traitors." CHAP. VI.

Sir John de Vienne wrote to the King of France and the Duke of Berry to acquaint them with his situation, and to inform them that if they desired to see him again they must send him the money for which he stood pledged. The French government immediately took measures to redeem the constable, and the sum demanded was raised with the utmost dispatch, and lodged in the town of Bruges for that purpose: he was then permitted to leave Scotland, and embarking at Edinburgh with a favourable wind, sailed for Sluys in Flanders. Some of the knights and esquires attached to this unfortunate expedition did not follow the same route, being desirous to see other countries besides Scotland; but the greater number returned in a deplorable condition to France, many of them so poor that they did not know how to remount themselves, and were obliged to seize the

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horses of the peasantry as they were working in the fields, an act of oppression which though in direct contradiction to those gentle rules of chivalry so much the admiration of modern times, no knight ever scrupled to commit when his necessities urged him to despoil the labourer of his hardly-earned cattle.

The report of the French knights was of course extremely unfavourable towards the country in which they had experienced such inhospitable treatment. The constable, in answering the questions of the king and the Duke of Berry concerning the disposition which the Scots manifested to maintain an alliance with France, expressed his opinion that they never would cordially assist in the invasion of England, to whom from their jealousy of foreigners they would naturally incline; and added, as God might help him, he would rather be Count of Savoy or of Artois, or of some such country, than King of Scotland. But however unwilling the Scots might be to give quarters in their own land to the troops of Charles, or to permit them to fight under their banners in their incursions on the English borders, they remained the steady and faithful friends of France during the whole of its long and sanguinary war with the House of Lancaster, shewing themselves so inveterate in their enmity to Henry V. that when in his last illness it was suggested to him that his malady was occasioned by the resentment of a Scottish saint whose shrine had been violated by his order, the monarch exclaimed, "I am bearded by Scots either alive or dead go where I will."

Since the Scots had profited so little by their

political and commercial intercourse with France and Flanders, countries which surpassed all the other parts of Europe in refinement and in luxury, the state of Ireland, an isolated spot which did not possess similar advantages, was as might be expected still more rude and barbarous. While Froissart was at Richard's court he obtained some curious particulars relative to the king's first expedition to Ireland from a gentleman, Henry Castide, or according to Stow, Cristall, in the monarch's service. From this account we learn that the king remained upwards of nine months in his Irish dominions, attended by a vast armament, which was maintained at a great expense; "But," observes the narrator, "it was cheerfully defrayed by the English, who thought the money well applied when they saw their sovereign return home with honour." Gentlemen and archers were alone employed upon this occasion, and there were with the king four thousand knights and esquires and thirty thousand archers all regularly paid every week. Cristall describes Ireland as a country presenting almost insurmountable difficulties to an hostile army; "for there are," he continues, "such impenetrable extensive forests, lakes and bogs, there is no knowing how to pass them and carry on the war advantageously: it is so thinly inhabited that whenever the Irish please they desert the towns and take refuge in their forests, and live in huts made of boughs like wild beasts; and whenever they observe any parties advancing with hostile dispositions and about to enter the country, they fly to such narrow passes it is impossible to follow them. When they find a favourable opportunity to attack their enemies

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to advantage, which frequently happens from their knowledge of the country, they fail not to seize it; and no man at arms be he ever so well mounted can overtake them so light are they of foot. Sometimes they leap from the ground behind a horseman and embrace the rider, for they are very strong in their arms, so tightly that he can no way get rid of them. The Irish have pointed knives with broad blades, sharp on both sides like a dart head, with which they kill their adversaries; but they never consider them as dead until they have cut their throats like sheep, opened their bodies, and taken out their hearts, which they carry off with them."

This savage mode of warfare infused a suspicion into the breasts of the English that these rude islanders were addicted to cannibalism, a horrible supposition strengthened by the vulgar love of the marvellous and the malicious reports of enemies; "for," adds the narrator, "some say who are well acquainted with their manners that they devour them as delicious morsels." From the same authority we also learn that the Irish did not according to the usage of other nations accept of ransom for their prisoners; and that when they were in danger of being worsted in any skirmish, they immediately separated, each person providing for his own safety by hiding in some hedge, bush or hole under ground, so that it was no uncommon thing for a whole party to disappear suddenly from their opponents no one could tell whither.

Four of the most potent kings belonging to the yet unsubdued districts of Ireland were induced to acknowledge Richard's authority; but we are told

that "it was more through love and good-humour than by battle or force." The Earl of Ormond whose lands were adjacent to the territories of these princes, succeeded in persuading them to repair to Dublin, where the King of England kept his court, and to submit themselves to him, a point of higher importance than had been gained by England under her warlike monarch Edward III., who strove in vain to reduce the native tribes to obedience.

Cristall had the misfortune to be made prisoner in early life, when engaged in Edward's service in Ireland: following the pursuit too hotly he outstripped his companions, and one of the enemy taking advantage of his rash impetuosity sprang up behind him on his horse, and hurried him forward to the security of a town surrounded by wood, and defended by palisades and stagnant water. In this place he was detained for a considerable period, but the kindness which he experienced lessened the severity of his lot; and entertaining little hope of recovering his liberty he married the daughter of his captor. The vicissitudes of war placed the father-in-law of the English knight in the hands of Lionel Duke of Clarence, and by this means the prisoner's friends were informed of his existence, and with some difficulty obtained his freedom. Henry Cristall, in consequence of his long residence in Ireland and his acquaintance with the language and customs of its semi-barbarous inhabitants, was appointed to an office of trust and honour about the persons of the four kings, who he was directed to instruct in the usages then most in fashion amid their more polished English neighbours: his success in the

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attempt to reclaim them from early habits was not very flattering; in reporting his labours to Froissart he honestly confesses the slight effect which his most earnest endeavours for their improvement produced. "I must say that these kings who were under my management were of coarse manners and understanding, and in spite of all I could do to soften their language and nature very little progress has been made, for they would frequently return to their former coarse behaviour. I will more particularly relate the charge that was given me over them, and how I managed it. The king of England intended that these four kings should adopt the manners, dress and appearance of the English, for he wanted to create them knights. He gave them first a very handsome house in Dublin for themselves and their attendants, where I was ordered to reside with them. I lived with them three or four days without any way interfering that we might become accustomed to each other, and allowed them to act just as they pleased. I observed that as they sate at table they made grimaces that did not seem to me graceful nor becoming, and I resolved in my mind to make them drop that custom. When these kings were seated at table and the first dish served, they would make their minstrels and principal servants sit beside them and eat from their plates and drink from their cups. They told me this was a praiseworthy custom of their country where everything was in common but the bed. I permitted this to be done for three days, but on the fourth I ordered the table to be laid out and covered properly, placing the four kings at an upper table,

the minstrels at another below, and the servants lower still. They looked at each other and would not eat, saying I had deprived them of an old custom in which they had been brought up." The chamberlain endeavoured to appease these unceremonious potentates by representing the necessity of complying with the etiquette suited to their rank and dignity, and by his good-humoured perseverance succeeded in gaining his point. "'They had," he continues, "another custom I knew to be common in the country, which was the not wearing breeches. I had in consequence plenty of breeches made of linen and cloth which I gave to the kings and their attendants, and accustomed them to wear them. I took away many rude articles, as well in their dress as other things, and had great difficulty at the first to induce them to wear robes of silken cloth trimmed with squirrel skins or minever; for the kings only wrapped themselves up in an Irish cloak. In riding they neither used saddles or stirrups, and I had some trouble to make them conform in this respect to English manners. I once made an inquiry concerning their faith, but they seemed so much displeased I was forced to silence; they said they believed in God and the Trinity without any difference to our creed. I asked which Pope they inclined to, they answered without hesitation 'To that of Rome.' When asked if they would like to receive the honour of knighthood, they answered that they were knights already which ought to content them, 'for in Ireland every king confers that honour upon his son at seven years old, and should the child have lost his father then the nearest rela-

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tion; and the young knight begins to learn to tilt with a light lance against a shield fixed to a post in a field, and the more lances he breaks the more honour he acquires.' 'By this method,' added they, 'are our young knights trained, more especially king's sons.' But having been told that the king of England would not be satisfied with this childish kind of knighthood, and wished to confer that honour upon them in the usual way with more imposing ceremonies in the church, they complied, watched their armour all night according to ancient custom in the cathedral, and were after mass on the morrow, being the feast of the virgin, created knights with much solemnity. The four kings we are told were very richly dressed suitable to their rank, and that day dined at the table of King Richard where they were much stared at by the lords and those present; "not indeed without reason" observes Cristall in conclusion, "for they were strange figures and differently countenanced to the English and other nations. We are naturally inclined to gaze at any thing strange, and it was certainly, Sir John, at that time a great novelty to see four Irish kings."

In this reign flourished Sir Richard Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London; than whom no chief magistrate of that imperial city has ever obtained or is likely to obtain a more immortal memory. The renown too of this eminent citizen is perhaps only the more illustrious, if like that of other heroes it be, what it bears the suspicion of being, considerably tinged with fable. That Sir Richard Whittington was really Lord Mayor of London for three successive periods is matter of city record; but as to the

circumstances to which he owed those multiplied honours, and even as to the manner in which he became possessed of the wealth which paved the way to so much civic eminence, neither history nor tradition afford unquestionable evidence; but a sinister conjecture seems at least admissible, that neither industry nor even a "cat" did so much for Whittington as family influence, the venality of the court of Richard II. and the corrupt system of favouritism, and flagrant violations of law for the benefit of those who could purchase the privilege of acting in direct contradiction to the statutes, which were the general political features of the times; and which if really connected with Whittington's wealth and splendour gives to the memory of this ancient mayor of the English capital so much the stronger claims to a place in the present history, where the errors of the government are at once the spots and the characteristics of so many of the pages.

Sir Richard at his death founded a college, then and still called from its founder Whittington college; and it is from the ordinances of that foundation itself, that we learn, what at once renders the tradition of his youthful poverty extremely doubtful, that he was the son of Sir William Whittington, knight. It may seem indeed that there was a family connection of some kind between this Sir William himself and the lords of Whittington in Derbyshire; but if so, it was probably through some younger branch only of the stock. In the year 1303 the lordship of Whittington passed into the hands of Guarine de Metz, who by superior prowess had won, at a tournament held at Peveril's place or

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castle, in the Peak, for the express purpose of determining the nuptial disposal of the lady, the hand of Mollett or Molde, sole daughter and heiress of the then Lord of Whittington. The posterity of Guarine (Warren) and Molde bore the name of Fitzwarren, and the wife of Sir Richard is recorded as Alice Fitzwarren, daughter of Hugh Fitzwarren and dame Molde his wife.

Be all this however as it may, Whittington from some original or other became a London merchant; and (if the monumental inscription at St. Michael's is to be believed) the very flower "*flos mercatorum*" of the whole mercantile community. He was of the livery of the Mercer's Company, but that circumstance as is well known affords no insight into the particular branch of merchandize which he pursued, and the information for which we search upon that head is equally denied us from any other source. A conjecture however has been thrown out which if well founded, not only mortifies us by casting additional discredit upon the pretty and useful fable of the "cat," and of its youthful owner's early poverty and happily rewarded merit, but opens fresh views of the lawlessness and court favouritism of the time, and unfortunately so far dims the lustre of the name of Whittington as to display its exaltation as the fruit of that corrupt influence so frequently obtained by patronage and bribery. The family of Whittington according to the evidence now adduced was settled in the north of England, that is, in the vicinity of the pit-coal counties and sea-ports. At the date when we may suppose Whittington a boy, the burning of pit-coal in London was esteemed

so great a nuisance that those who ventured to consume the prohibited fuel were rendered punishable under the statute with the penalty of death; and that the actual enforcement of this statute took place is evinced by the record of the execution of individuals for this offence still preserved among the archives of the Tower of London. But notwithstanding the severity of such a law, and the proof that at one period at least all its severity was rigorously executed, we come down as low as the year 1419, before which time Whittington had served all his three several mayoralties, without finding that a repeal of the statute had taken place. The importation of pit-coal formed a considerable branch of the commerce of the Thames. "As early," says the author of the History of Newcastle, "as 1421 it appears that it was a trade of great importance, and that a duty of two pence per chaldron had been imposed upon it *for some time.*" Now to account for this professed and public sanction of a trade which was still prohibited by law, it is only needful to advert to that dispensing power which the English crown so notoriously assumed in this and other periods of its early history, and by means of which the operation of the law was arbitrarily suspended, abrogated or qualified. But to imagine at the same time that the regal power ever interposed in any manner consistent with general justice, and not for the advantage of some court favourite or directly or indirectly for the benefit of some individual purchasing the monopoly, would be to betray a very slight acquaintance with the character and usages of the era. The probability

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then is that the coal trade between Newcastle and London was thus pursued without the repeal of the law which forbade it in virtue only of the especial license of the crown, and that the license was held through purchase by some individual or individuals thus enabled to raise a fortune at the expense of his fellow-countrymen through the enjoyment of a monopoly.

To leap nevertheless from the premises now offered to the conclusion that Sir Richard Whittington was the actual and sole individual, or even a participator with others in the enjoyment of this monopoly, and that a monopoly of the London coal trade with Newcastle was the real source of his splendid civic fortunes, would without farther authority be absurdity: but the suspicion receives colour and countenance from the language in which the charter of Whittington College is couched: its members are directed in this document to remember in their prayers for ever "Richard II. and Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, special lords and promoters of the said Richard Whittington." Whittington therefore owed to the *king* and the *duke* some exclusive privilege or favour, for which he thought himself bound to offer the gravest acknowledgment; and here it cannot be too much to suppose the possibility that this favour or privilege was the source of the fortune, which enabled him to found that college whose members were thus to remember in their prayers Richard II. and Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, special lords and promoters of the said Richard Whittington.

As to the story of "Whittington's cat," so pre-

cious in its character as being one of the few romances which embellish the history of the English "royal city," and gild it with at least partial rays of the imagination, there seems strong reason to apprehend that the severity of true biography in this, as in so many other instances, must declare itself, however reluctantly, against the reality of its foundations. The original fiction, in company with many others, and in conformity with the usual fortune of such narrations, appears to have made the circle of the habitable globe; or rather to have migrated westward, from the ancient seats and springs of all fiction, fable, poetry, science and philosophy, in the countries of the east. According to a Persian manuscript quoted by that diligent living orientalist Sir William Ouseley, there is an island in Persia which owes its very name to a tradition corresponding to that of the immortal lord mayor of London. In the tenth century, as we learn from the manuscript, one Kees, the son of a poor widow of Siraf, embarked for India with his whole property—a cat. Fortunately for the needy adventurer he arrived in the country at the very time when the royal palace of its king had become so infested either with mice or rats, that these animals made themselves guests at the very banquets of the court, and officers of the household were required to attend for the express purpose of defending the viands before they reached the lips of the persons who were expected to partake of them. It was at a conjuncture thus critical that the son of the widow produced his cat, and by the active employment of whose teeth and talons the direful plague was speedily arrested, and her penniless mas-

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ter raised into the highest esteem in the kingdom to which he had brought her. Magnificent rewards were lavished upon him by the grateful monarch and his courtiers, and a mine of wealth exchanged with him for his cat; after which returning to Siraf and taking thence his mother and his brothers the whole family settled in the island, which, from his own name, has thenceforward been called Keis, or according to the Persians, Keish. The possibility of a corresponding occurrence if not in London, and to Whittington, has been contended for as having a certain similitude to an authenticated fact, of which the scene was South America. The first couple of cats that were carried to Cuyuba, "sold," says the English historian of the Brazils, "for a pound (a pound weight) of gold. There was a plague of rats in the settlement, and the cats were purchased as a mercantile speculation, and with perfect success." "The kittens," it is added, "produced thirty *otiavas* each; the next generation were worth twenty; and the price gradually fell, as the inhabitants were stocked with these beautiful and useful creatures." But without adverting in this place to the great local dissimilitude which the circumstances of *country* introduces between the respective tales, it seems sufficiently safe to unite with a distinguished antiquary in adopting a belief that the story of "Whittington and his cat" is no more than a real London version of that of the son of the widow of Siraf. It has been urged indeed, in reply, that to yield to this supposition is to make mere resemblance a perfect proof of identity; and that London, like the city of India, might have happened (and

this in the very days of Whittington's youth and pretended poverty) to have had its own plague of rats; and even that from particular coincidences cats, in more places and more times than one, may have been worth their weight in gold. Assuming however, the single historical fact that Sir Richard Whittington, "thrice Lord Mayor of London," left a memory both for wealth and splendour which "lingered in men's ears" long before it received the assistance of a junction with the story of the cat, nothing seems more easy to be conceived than the motives which should induce some English inventor of popular narrations to affix the name of so famous a citizen to his English naturalization of the adventures of Keis. The early part of Whittington's true record may have faded from the public memory, while nevertheless the report of his riches and greatness was still fresh on the public lips. But many of the lord-mayors of London have risen from the depths of want into personal wealth, and into civic pre-eminence, through the aid either of singular occurrences or of great labour, frugality, and long struggling with their original penury. Now examples of both these sources of this happy change of men's fortunes are agreeable to the ears of those who listen to them, and even moral or useful to the interests of society, in the one case as nurses of hope and the encouragers of enterprize, and in the other as teachers of industry, perseverance, patience, and prudence.

The history of Sir Richard Whittington, received as it has been given above, possesses nothing either of similar interest or of similar utility; but

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conceal the circumstance that this rich and powerful civic magistrate was in fact born to wealth and friends, and was aided throughout his commercial career by the power and even the corruption of a sovereign and a court; speak of him only as having reached wealth and greatness, and insist that he reached both from out of the abyss of poverty; add, that the foundation of the whole was the possession, by a poor and unprotected boy, of so insignificant a treasure (so insignificant in common estimation), and in ordinary circumstances, as a starveling cat; and instantly you have formed a romance which will fill the imagination and haunt the memory of young and old; which will inspire the dreams of destitute but budding youth; which will oppose itself to the despair of poverty; which will support patience, animate perseverance, encourage industry and prudence, and proclaim the great and valuable truth, that there are no clouds of condition to which there may not succeed the sunshine of prosperity! Such, then, may be the probable origin of the pleasing fiction of Whittington and his cat, and in this manner may we remove the difficulties that present themselves to our unqualified adoption of what seems to be the actual history of the renowned lord-mayor of London.

John Philpot, alderman and citizen of London, may be truly designated as one of the bravest, most active, and patriotic subjects of Richard II. The heroic exploits performed by this estimable person in the service of his country, being untinctured with romance or legendary fame, have been permitted to remain in obscurity; while the doubt-

ful merits of Whittington, and the still more doubtful tale of his cat, have procured for that more fortunate personage a name and reputation, which though owing their chief support to the popularity of a nursery story, will last until those delightful traditions which it is the hopeless and hateful task of truth-loving antiquaries to disparage and to deny, shall lose their attractive influence over the human mind.

Few men have deserved more honour from the community which they have adorned, or obtained less than John Philpot; his memory and his actions are suffered to sleep in the old chronicles which record his splendid achievements in the defence of England's glory. The imbecility of the ministry in the early part of the reign of Richard II. amid other disasters which it entailed upon the kingdom, encouraged the fleets of France to ravage the defenceless coast, and the impunity with which hostile vessels plundered the unprotected towns and villages, induced a Scottish adventurer named Mercer to wage a predatory war upon his own account, and being joined by other desperadoes as daring and as fortunate as himself, he became so formidable that the king and the council were entreated to prevent and punish aggressions which were so disgraceful and so ruinous to the nation.*

The subject was debated in the cabinet, but no measures were taken to remedy the evil, and Philpot perceiving the supineness of the government, and hopeless of obtaining aid and sanction from men who appeared to be totally regardless of the honour

* Holingshed.

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of their king and country, promptly and efficiently equipped a few vessels, which at his own expense he furnished with an ample complement of men, ammunition, and all other requisites for the intended service, and taking the command himself, put out to sea with the determination to avenge the insults offered to the English crown. Encountering the marauders upon an element, and in a service to which the brave Philpot was wholly unaccustomed, the intrepidity of the dauntless citizen prevailed over every disadvantage, and after a sharp engagement he achieved a splendid and signal victory, capturing Mercer and his whole fleet, consisting of several ships which the pirate had seized in the port of Scarborough, and fifteen Spanish vessels laden with spoil. Philpot sailed triumphantly to London with his prizes, and received an enthusiastic welcome from the citizens and the populace, who greeted his return with shouts and acclamations.

The nobles jealous of the honours so justly paid to Philpot's valour, and mortified by the tacit reproach which the disinterested zeal in the public service displayed by a private individual conveyed to men who were the constituted guardians of the nation's honour, summoned him before the council to give an account of his conduct. The Earl of Stafford even went so far as to charge this loyal subject of the crown with the commission of an unlawful act, in presuming to levy forces in the king's dominions without the sovereign's permission. But Philpot repelled the accusation with so much spirit and firmness that the attempt to procure his disgrace was

abandoned, and he was dismissed with the commendations due to his merits, and the benefit which he had conferred.

Few memorials remain to perpetuate the remembrance of Philpot's glorious action; a narrow lane in the city of London, which bears his name, we are told by Stow has derived its appellation from the residence of this distinguished ornament of the aldermanic body; but the tongue of fame has not blazoned its origin, and it is daily pronounced without bringing any reminiscence of the hero who so justly deserves the admiration and esteem of all posterity.

While the exploits of Philpot and of Walworth, London's gallant lord-mayor, shed unwonted lustre upon the civic community, hitherto stigmatized for their turbulence, or accused of an inordinate and exclusive attachment to the luxurious ease offered to the wealthy, the martial ardour of a churchman was kindled at the call of danger. The pacific duties imposed by the ecclesiastical profession could not fetter the arm of one who disdained to remain an inglorious spectator of the evils arising from the imbecility of the government, and who threw down the crosier and seized the sword whenever the exigencies of the times demanded his interference.

Henry de Spencer, styled "the warlike Bishop of Norwich," was one of the brightest luminaries of Richard II.'s reign: he had served under his brother in the Pope's wars, and acquired both dexterity and judgment in military affairs, which he exercised with much success at different periods of his life. This martial prelate resolutely opposed himself to the

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insolence of the Commons, and by his intrepidity and promptitude awed the insurrectionary spirit which manifested itself in the vicinity of his diocese, into subjection. During the schism in the church, Henry de Spencer espoused the cause of Urban VI. who was favoured by his sovereign King Richard, against the anti-Pope Clement VII. whose claims were supported by the French monarch, and when his active services were required in the field, raised levies of men and money, with the vigorous dispatch which rendered all his measures so peculiarly effective, and in the struggle which took place upon the continent, emulated the brightest deeds of his most distinguished contemporaries. Laurels as blooming as those which decked the insignia of the boldest knight, were wreathed around the bishop's mitre, and it is said that the jealousy of the Duke of Lancaster occasioned the gallant prelate's recall from the theatre of his exploits. Upon his return the chancellor brought four charges against him in Parliament, but he replied in person with so much energy that the design of his accuser failed.

Henry de Spencer was one of the most indefatigable amid the enemies of the Wickliffites, whom he persecuted with rigorous severity.

The city of Norwich is indebted for a beautiful gate, a splendid relique of the architectural genius of the age, to the bishop's ardour in the extirpation of heresy.

Sir Thomas Erpingham, a man of wealth and influence in the city of Norwich, deeply impressed with the truth of the reformer's doctrines, not only avowed his own sentiments, but laboured to work

the same conviction in the breasts of others, and by his zeal and success incurred the resentment of the ecclesiastical power.

The despotic prelate imprisoned his adversary, employed the terrors of the church to compel him to recant, and obliged him to build the gate, called after this distinguished penitent, the Erpingham gate, as an atonement for his heresy, and a public memorial of his contrition.

Sir Thomas was afterwards reconciled to his pastor by the command of Henry IV., who in a parliament held in February 1400, publicly expressed his approbation of the bishop's arbitrary proceedings, and enjoined the oppressor and the oppressed to shake hands and kiss each other, which says our author* "they did." Henry de Spencer's severity, and the commendation bestowed upon it by the king, crushed the knight's efforts in the cause of religious liberty in the bud; and we are informed that during the remainder of his life he lived upon the most friendly terms with the bishop, and displayed his utter forgetfulness of the animosity of the monks of Norwich by several munificent benefactions to the cathedral.

* Britton.

CHAPTER VII.

Elevation of the House of Lancaster—Origin of the Mortimers—Loyalty of Roger Mortimer—his Chivalry—Earldom conferred on the guilty Favourite of Isabella—Restoration of the Title by Edward III.—Illustrious Marriage of Edmund Mortimer—Roger's impetuous Valour—Dispute between Owen Glendor and Lord Grey—Glendor appeals to the Sword—is victorious—Glendor claims the Sovereignty of Wales—Battle between Glendor and Mortimer—Defeat of the latter—Henry's Refusal of the Request of the Percies—their Indignation—and Revolt—their Alliance with Scotland and Wales—Henry marches to Chester—Defiance of the Percies—the King's Answer—Propositions for Peace—which are refused—Generous Rivalry of Douglas and Percy—Defeat of the Percies—Valour of the King and of the Prince of Wales—The King marches to the North—Northumberland's Defence—is restored to Favour—Tenacious Confidence of the adverse Party—Murmurs at Taxations—Discontent of the Clergy—Report of Richard's Existence—Distribution of his Badge—Attempt of Lady Le Despencer—Reception of the Mortimers—Ordeal offered—Imprisonment of Rutland—Execution of the Locksmith.

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THE House of Lancaster had now attained the full plenitude of power to which its aspirations for so long a period were supposed to have been directed; the potent kinsman, the wealthy subject, was seated on the throne, yet there still remained a competitor who notwithstanding his apparent obscurity was the primary cause of a rebellion which shook the foundation of the new dynasty, and had nearly levelled it

to the earth. It does not come within the province of these memoirs to narrate all the events of Henry's reign. Necessarily compelled to take a brief survey of the domestic transactions in England which preceded the bursting forth of that quenchless flame of civil dissension which stayed not its devouring progress until it had consumed the best blood in the devoted land, we are only required to trace the almost silent progress of the rival family to the vast acquisition of strength and riches which enabled it to make a long, a fearful, and at length successful struggle for the crown.

The young Earl of March, closely allied to the Plantagenets by the marriage of his grandfather with Phillippa daughter of the Duke of Clarence, was also of scarcely less illustrious descent through his paternal ancestors. Roger Mortimer, the first we are told by Dugdale known in England, was related to the Norman invader, his mother being the niece of Gunnora wife of Richard Duke of Normandy, great grandmother of the Conqueror. From the reign of that monarch to the accession of Edward II. the Mortimers were invariably distinguished for their loyalty; we learn that Hugh Mortimer during the wars between John and his Barons, adhered "stoutly to the king;"* his successors Ralph and Roger in the reign of Henry III. following the example of their forefathers, firmly supported the interests of the crown, and like them suffered considerably for their undeviating attachment to the person of the king, by the devastation committed by the adverse party on their castles and estates on the

* Dugdale.

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marches of Wales. Roger Mortimer, after the fatal battle of Lewes in which both Henry and his son had fallen into the hands of the rebellious Montford, in conjunction with the Earl of Gloucester, actively assisted the young prince in his escape, he being the person, according to Dugdale, who sent the "swift horse" which Edward mounted after having fatigued his keepers in a pretended race, and who covered his retreat by issuing out of a wood at the head of five hundred men; and having brought off the heir of England in safety to his castle of Wigmore, he obtained an accession of glory in the subsequent battle which crushed the power of the barons, and restored Henry to his throne.

One of the brightest flowers of English chivalry, the whole of the christian world was filled with admiration at the knightly exploits of this gallant and accomplished nobleman, who not less famous in peace than in war, emulated the bravery, the liberality and courtesy of the Paladins of old, and now shines on the page of history with the dazzling grandeur of a hero of romance. His son Edmund was married to a kinswoman of Edward's queen, and their nuptials were graced by the royal presence, but killed in battle fighting against Lewellyn Prince of Wales, his heir, Roger, who obtained such disgraceful notoriety as the insolent paramour of the shameless Isabella, then a minor, was committed to the wardship of Piers Gaveston. The history of this great but unhappy man, as he is styled by Dugdale, is too well known to require repetition. The single stain on the annals of the House of Mortimer, the title of Earl of March conferred upon him during

the vicious ascendance which he held over Edward's dissolute consort, but ill compensated for the loss of the proud integrity so scrupulously maintained by his ancestors; he finished his career of crime upon a scaffold, and the whole of his ill-acquired wealth was confiscated.* The forfeited earldom was regained by his grandson who, left an orphan at three years old, was brought up in the court of Edward III. and shared the honour of knighthood from the hands of that gallant monarch with the Black Prince at an early age, as an encouragement to fight boldly in the sovereign's cause. In the 26th of Edward III. he obtained a reversal of the judgment against his grandfather, and thenceforth bore the title of Earl of March.° His son and successor Edmund worthily supported his high rank, by his splendid services in France and Ireland, and by his marriage with Phillippa, daughter of the Duke of Clarence before-mentioned, transmitted the rightful claim to the crown of England to his descendants. Roger, a stout knight who yielded not in beauty of person, intrepidity of conduct, and dexterity in the martial accomplishments of the age to his most spirited and celebrated compeers, won the affection of Richard II. by a congeniality of disposition displayed in the lavish splendour of his household, the indulgence of the gay and frequent carousal, and the wild levity of his disregard of all religious restrictions. According to Froissart he resumed the personal command of his government in Ireland in which he had succeeded his father by the king's appointment, to avoid the overtures of the Duke of Gloucester, anxious to engage him in an intrigue against his

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sovereign: and here his bold and reckless daring hurried him into a premature grave. Rushing furiously to the assault in a combat with the Sept of O'Brien, his headlong valour distanced his followers, and fighting in the disguise of an Irish horseman he was overpowered by numbers, and torn to pieces by his savage enemies ere he could be rescued from their hands. The rash attempt to revenge his death produced the most disastrous consequences to Richard II., and the helpless heirs of the House of Mortimer having fallen into the power of Henry of Lancaster, were given by him in ward to his son the Prince of Wales, and guarded with jealous care in Windsor Castle; their well-wishers in England could scarcely entertain a hope of ever being able to establish them upon the throne, but a short time opened brighter views and inspired more vivid expectations.

A petty feud on the Welch border proved to be the commencement of hostilities which eventually threatened the crown and life of the reigning monarch. Owen Glendor, a gentleman of honourable lineage, said to be descended from the native princes of Wales, had retired to a small patrimony in the land of his birth; he had received his education at one of the inns of court in London, and had subsequently served as an esquire in the household of King Richard. The adjoining estate belonged to the Lord Grey of Ruthyn, and a dispute arose between them respecting a piece of land which each claimed as his right; the proud noble according to the fashion of the times disdaining to prove his title, seized upon the ground in question,

and resolved to keep it in despite of law or of justice. It was not in the Welchman's power to obtain either; he presented a petition to parliament through the medium of the Bishop of St. Asaph, who gave it his warm support, but the prelate's aid proved too feeble to withstand the superior influence of Lord Grey, and denied the restitution of his rights with scorn and contumely, Glendor determined to have recourse to arms. At the head of a rude yet powerful host he invaded his enemy's territory, became conqueror in the strife, and carried off the Lord of Ruthyn prisoner. This nobleman being a firm friend to the house of Lancaster received the king's support against an adherent of Richard II. Henry passed a sentence of outlawry on his captor, and Owen thus menaced by the royal displeasure boldly asserted a right to the sovereignty of Wales, and promised to liberate his country from the English yoke. The spirit of freedom was not yet extinct in the breasts of the natives, they acknowledged Glendor for their prince, and crowded to his standard with zeal and alacrity; his incursions disturbed the peace of the whole border, and Sir Edward Mortimer, uncle to the young Earl of March, who resided at his castle of Wigmore, roused by the repeated indignities offered by the turbulent Welchman, summoned his vassals and retainers and led them forth to chastise the rude mountaineers and their hardy chieftain. Glendor gave battle to the enemy at Knighton in Radnorshire, and a second time victorious routed the soldiers and captured their commander.

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1402.

1402, June 22.

The friends of the Lord Grey had obtained the king's permission to ransom their kinsman with ten

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thousand marks; Sir Edmund Mortimer was nearly allied to the Percies, Henry, surnamed Hotspur, having married the Lady Elizabeth his sister; these noblemen were anxious to obtain his redemption and solicited the same favour from Henry. The jealous monarch well pleased to behold the misfortunes of a race whom he feared and hated, returned a peremptory refusal, an insult which exasperated this haughty family, who justly deemed that he who now "forbade their tongues to speak of Mortimer," was indebted to their exertions for the crown he wore.

The horror which the perusal of Northumberland's treachery is calculated to produce in the breasts of all just persons, will be considerably diminished by the strong proofs here afforded by the Percies of their decided disapproval of Bolingbroke's usurpation. If we suppose that the earl, anxious to restore the heir of Lancaster to his rights, and to oblige the king to rule according to law and justice, believed the exile's oaths, and was convinced of the necessity of securing the person of Richard in order to bind him to the observance of conditions by which alone the friends of good government could permit him to reign, he is at once exonerated from the most atrocious part of the heavy charge which is brought against him. We have the authority of Hardynge, a contemporary, who though naturally biassed in favour of his patron is nevertheless not unworthy of credit, to assert that when Henry, encouraged by the zeal of his partisans threw off the mask and proceeded to the deposition of Richard, Northumberland stoutly maintained the right of the young Earl of March, and strenuously insisted even up to the

evening previous to Lancaster's seizure of the crown, that the accession of Edward Mortimer as it had been settled by Parliament could alone be established by law. The party in favour of Henry prevailed, and the Percies, together with other friends to the cause of the Earl of March, tacitly acquiesced in a measure which they could not prevent. Yet notwithstanding the repeated favours heaped upon them by the king, their indignation was not to be appeased when they discovered that they had been duped by his artifice and employed as the tools of his perjury, and incensed by his rejection of their suit, Thomas and Harry Percy who had been perfectly guiltless of all share in the deceit practised against Richard, may well be supposed to have urged the Earl of Northumberland to vindicate himself from the odium of that dark transaction, by openly espousing the cause of the Mortimers now evidently devoted to ruin by their too successful enemy. Another cause of disgust has been ascribed by many writers to the controul assumed by the king over the prisoners lately taken by the Percies in the Scottish war; the fate of the captured usually rested with the conqueror; on this occasion Henry interposed his authority and commanded that they should neither ransom nor liberate them, a privilege which had often been asserted by his predecessors; nor could the Earl of Northumberland justly stigmatize the act as arbitrary or ungracious since he had received an adequate remuneration from the lands of the Lord Douglas in addition to grants from the crown of other valuable manors.

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There needed little provocation to kindle such fiery temperaments. Previously discontented, the king's manifest injustice towards Edmund Mortimer determined them to appeal to arms, and in the true spirit of feudal arrogance the Percies revolted at once from their allegiance, gave freedom to the Earl of Douglas upon condition that he should join them with his retainers, and entered into a treaty with the leader of the Welsh malcontents.

The superstition of the age had invested Glendor with extraordinary powers: he was reported to hold communion with the spirits of another world; and the address displayed by him in the desultory mode of warfare which he had adopted contributed to strengthen that opinion. The king himself had already led three armies to the frontiers, but could not meet with any enemy save famine and the fury of the elements; the wily mountaineers retreated before him to their caves and fastnesses, and baffled every endeavour which Henry made to bring them to action. Exposed to innumerable hardships, and weary of a fatiguing march through a barren and apparently uninhabited country, the monarch retired from his fruitless expeditions only consoled under the idea that he had been discomfited by the aid of necromancy. According to common report the Prince of Darkness was an active and personal enemy of the king. Holingshed tells an amusing story which is valuable, inasmuch as it tends to illustrate the excessive credulity of the people at this period. "On Corpus Christi daye," says our chronicler, "at even song the Devill as was thought

appeared in a town of Essex called Danburie, entering into the churche in likeness of a graie friar, behaving himself very outragiously, playing his pirtes like a devill indeede; so that the parishioners were put in a marvellous great fright." The infernal visitant made his exit through the roof of the church, which he carried away with him; an exploit well adapted to bring the fraternity into disrepute whose habit the evil spirit had assumed. Eight grey friars had been lately apprehended for uttering treasonable words; one of them being asked how he would behave if King Richard were still alive, unhesitatedly replied, "That he would fight against any [illegible] even unto death." He lost his life for [illegible] of this bold sentiment, and [illegible] the g[illegible] his [illegible] was [illegible] hung in his [illegible]eds." [illegible] policy of both parties to [illegible] themselves of [illegible] error; [illegible] Glen[illegible] [illegible] the "strange wonders" [illegible] his nativity, he [illegible] revived a pr[illegible] [illegible] of Merlin, which he promised to fu[illegible] [illegible] Henry and the division of his kingdom. [illegible] of the force raised by Northumberla[illegible] [illegible] that of [illegible]ouglas and Glendor, would in [illegible] [illegible]oved fatal to the king had he per[illegible] [illegible]; but he perceived at once the [illegible] to prevent it. Hotspur at the [illegible]d of [illegible] Northumbrian bands, toge[illegible]er with his [illegible]rl of Worcester, leading [illegible] strong body of [illegible] Cheshire, were visi[illegible] from the walls [illegible] at the moment th[illegible] Henry entered a[illegible] town; the insurgen[illegible] withdrew to Hart[illegible] preparations for

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engagement, and from thence in obedience to the laws of chivalry sent a defiance to the king. The [illegible] in this spirited manifesto accuse Henry of [illegible] acts of perjury, of swearing to them on the "[illegible] Gospells" that he only entered England to [illegible] his own inheritance* and that of his wife, and [illegible] wards imprisoning the king and obliging [illegible] menaces of death to renounce his crown and king- dom. "Under coulor of whiche resignation and renunciation by the counsaile of thy frendes and complices, and by the open noysing of the [illegible] people by thee and thy adherents assembled [illegible] minster, thou hast crowned thyself king [illegible] realmes aforesaid, and hast seazed and [illegible] all the castles and [illegible] king's crowne [illegible]

In the next [illegible] having imposed taxes without [illegible] son the parliament, though he had pro- [illegible] to the observance of the laws. In the [illegible] aided with cruelty to King Richard [illegible] we do alledge saie and entende to prove [illegible] thou sworest to us upon the [illegible] forsaid place and tyme, that [illegible] thyne Kyng Richarde should [illegible] terme of his life in his royall pre- [illegible] thou hast caused the [illegible] thine traiterously with- [illegible] without the consent [illegible] of the realme, by the [illegible] so many knightes (which [illegible] people to [illegible] to perishe,

to be murdered. Wherefore thou art perjured and false." The fourth accusation relates to the superior claim of the Earl of March. "Also we do alledge saie and entende to prove that thou at that tyme when our sovereign lorde and thyne Kyng Richarde was so by that horible murder ded as above saied, thou by extorte power diddest usurpe and take the kyngdom of Englande, and the name and honour of the kyngdom of Fraunce, unjustly and wrongfully contrary to thine othe, from Edmonde Mortimer Earl of Marche and of Ulster, then next and direct heir imediately by due course of inheritance after the deceasse of the forsaied Richard. *Wherefore* thou art perjured and false."

The Percies likewise accuse King Henry of destroying the freedom of election, of procuring a parliament devoted to his will, and denying the redress of grievances, notwithstanding the complaints which they had continually made against such [illegible] justice. "Wherefore nowe by force [illegible] of hande before our Lord Jesu Christe [illegible] our remedy and help." Lastly they complain, when their kinsman Edmunde Mortimer was taken prisoner in open fight against Owen Glendor, he not only refused to ransom or allow his friends to deliver him, but spread a report that the captive had yielded willingly to the enemy, and branded his friends with the name of traitors because they had treated for his release. "For the whiche cause we defy thee, thy fautores and complices, as comen traytoures and destroyers of the realme, and the invadours, oppressers, and confounders of the verie true and right heires to the crowne of England, whiche thynge we

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entende with our handes to prove this daie, Almighty God helping us."* Henry perused this defiance, and told the messenger that he would reply to his enemies with the sword, and prove in battle their quarrel to be false and feigned, rather than by bandying slanderous words, trusting in God to give him the victory over perjured traitors.

The next morning a fierce and bloody conflict ensued, a prelude well worthy to usher in the bitter strife between the adverse roses. The strength of the two armies was so nicely poised, each being composed of about fourteen thousand men, that the politic king deemed it to be unwise to hazard a battle wherein a defeat must be attended with inevitable ruin, if it could not avoided upon honourable terms; he therefore sent the Abbot of Westminster to proffer [illegible] to the insurgents. The Earl of Northumberland was absent from the field, his attendance prevented by illness.† It is said that his son Hotspur was not unwilling to accede to the conditions proposed, but that the Earl of Worcester possessed with an unextinguishable hatred to the king, prevailed against every pacific measure, and both parties prepared for an engagement. The
July 21. royal army advanced, shouting the ancient battle cry, "St. George and England!" and the rebel host made the field resound with "Percy!" and with "Espérance!" each rushed to the charge, and the action commenced with a shower of arrows equally destructive on both sides. Douglas and the valiant Percy, hitherto generous yet deadly rivals, now fighting side by side in glorious emula-

* Hall. † Walsingham.

tion, swept at the head of thirty attendants, through the hostile lines, and penetrated the very centre of the enemy: nothing could withstand their murderous progress as they urged their fierce career, pressing forward to seize the person of the king. Henry's body-guards fell in heaps before them, his standard was trampled in the dust, and four knights and nobles who had assumed his armour to deceive the foe, fell a sacrifice to their temerity. Still the king was not to be found, and the disappointed warriors hemmed in on all sides, turned to cut their desperate path through surrounding enemies. Retreating with the same determined valour which had marked their advance, just as they had nearly extricated themselves from the unequal struggle a random shot pierced the brain of the victorious Percy, he fell, and the report of his death spread terror and consternation through his followers. [illegible] happily said, that "a single arrow saved Henry's crown, and deprived the best knight in England of the victory."

Neither the King nor the Prince of Wales had been idle, the latter fought with skill and bravery, and refused to leave the field though wounded in the face.

Henry upheld his early reputation, and yielded not in deeds of glory to the flower of English chivalry opposed against him. Clad in a plain suit of armour he joined the ranks as a private soldier, death followed every stroke of his conquering sword, and it is said that thirty-six of the rebels were slain by the gallant monarch in this well-contested field. The battle lasted three hours, and was decided by

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the fall of Percy; discomfited by the loss of their leader his retainers fled, the king raised the shout of "St. George and Victory!" and the remnant of the vanquished party submitted to his arms. The Earl of Douglas, the Earl of Worcester, the Baron Kinderton, and Sir Richard Vernon, were among those who fell into the victor's hands. Douglas was received with the courtesy granted to a prisoner of war, the others suffered the doom of traitors.

July 23. The loss on the king's side is stated to have amounted to nearly five thousand men, a number considerably surpassed by that on the part of the insurgents. The tardy progress of the Earl of Northumberland, marching at the head of a reinforcement, was arrested by the melancholy intelligence of his son's death, and the consequent defeat of his party; he retired to his castle of Warkworth and disbanded his troops. Meanwhile the king dispatched the Prince of Wales to meet Glendor, and moved northwards for the purpose of extinguishing the last sparks of a rebellion which had proved so formidable.

Feigning that Hotspur had raised the late insurrection without his concurrence, and that he had assembled his retainers in aid of the royal cause, Northumberland ventured to attend Henry's summons at York.

Aug. 11. The king proceeded with lenity and caution, he would not give implicit credit to the earl's vindication, yet refrained from executing the vengeance which his more than doubtful treason might have excused. Placed under safe but not ungentle re-

striction he was detained to answer the charges against him in the next parliament.

Henry was not a merciless conqueror. Though sometimes suffering ungenerous feelings to prevail, he took no delight in the blood of his opponents, and seldom lifted the axe to strike, until more gentle methods to subdue hostility had failed. The fraud and perfidy with which he had won the crown were not followed by an indiscriminate slaughter so usually the close attendant of an usurper's reign; the executions which took place under his government were rather acts of necessity than of revenge; where he could pardon without danger the royal clemency was never withheld.

Northumberland, notwithstanding his deep involvement in the late conspiracy, escaped with life. On the meeting of parliament he presented a petition to the king, wherein he confessed that he had infringed the law by gathering retainers and arraying them in his livery, but entreated Henry to remember that he had obeyed his commands in appearing before him at York, where he had received a gracious promise of mercy. The king without seeking other and more fatal evidence against him, allowed his nobles to pronounce judgment upon those offences only which the earl had acknowledged: his guilt was adjudged to be merely that of a trespass, subject to a fine at the pleasure of the king, and this penalty was remitted upon his taking the oaths of fealty and allegiance to Henry, his four sons, and their issue. 1404.

The failure of this powerful and well concerted

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enterprize, menaced the fortunes of the Mortimers with utter ruin, yet there still remained a party in England who in despite of the king's recent successes secretly cherished hopes of ultimately triumphing over the proud house of Lancaster.

Henry's popularity was even now upon the wane, the constant demand for taxes which the unwearied attempts of his enemies obliged him to make, disgusted the people with a government which they had vainly hoped would have relieved them from the odious burthens imposed by his predecessor.

He had manifested a desire to enrich himself with the spoils of the church,* and had endeavoured to resume certain grants of the crown to the great indignation of both clergy and laity, naturally tenacious of their possessions and resentful of so invidious a stretch of the royal prerogative. The licentious insolence of the lower orders of friars had compelled the king to acts of unwonted severity towards the priesthood, hitherto protected by their habit from the disgraceful punishment allotted to traitors; and thus a murmuring spirit was disseminated throughout all classes, men were induced to pry into the reigning monarch's title, and to pronounce it to "be too indirect for long continuance." The release of the young Earl of March and his brother became an object of great importance to the disaffected, who required a pretext for their perpetual conspiracies, and were compelled to spread reports of the existence of Richard as an incentive to rebellion. A rumour of the late king's escape into Scotland, revived the hopes of the credulous.

* Walsingham.

The privy seal of the deposed prince had been counterfeited by his chamberlain, and annexed to letters dispatched in his name to his partizans in England. The old Countess of Oxford, mother of the unhappy favourite the Duke of Ireland, had distributed Harts of gold and silver (the cognizance usually assumed by Richard's adherents) to his friends and favourers, and more than one person had been induced to personate the deceased king. These artifices were detected and exposed by Henry's unceasing vigilance; and the device growing stale, the enemies of the government were compelled to have recourse to other and more efficient measures. The widow of Lord Le Despencer, a nobleman distinguished for his zealous attachment to his unfortunate master, who had been executed at Bristol by the citizens for his too faithful adherence to a ruined cause, ventured upon a bold attempt to liberate the captive Mortimers. She procured false keys to their apartments in Windsor castle, and succeeded in conveying them out of their prison; but here fortune deserted them, they were pursued and brought back ere they could reach the frontiers of Wales. The lady was examined before the council, and actuated either by fear or resentment declared her brother, late Earl of Rutland and now by the death of his father Duke of York, to be implicated in the plot. Notorious for his intriguing spirit and his dexterous evasions from his fellow conspirators upon the slightest prospect of failure, he denied all participation in this daring project. Lady Le Despencer persisted in her charge, offering to prove its truth by the sword of any knight or esquire who could

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be found to wage battle in her cause,* and to submit to death at the stake should her champion be overthrown. William Maidstone one of her esquires, immediately declared his readiness to engage the duke in single combat in defence of the lady's honour, and the accused threw down his hood in the hall in token that he accepted the challenge. The king however refused his consent to this approved mode of deciding a disputed point, and seizing the
Mar. 12. duke's estates cast him into prison, where he remained until the successive triumphs of the crown rendered the disaffection of this restless prince a matter of little moment, and he was set free. The unfortunate locksmith† employed upon this occasion was the only person who suffered the penalty of death, for faithful to his trust, or ignorant of the contrivers of the plot, he made no discovery. Had the scheme succeeded the disaffected would have doubtless rallied round the Earl of March; they were now compelled to seek another leader, and so deadly was their animosity against the king that they flung themselves headlong into danger, and unappalled by the difficulties of the enterprize only sought to disturb a government which they could scarcely hope to overturn.

* Otterb. † Walsingham.

CHAPTER VIII.

Revolt of the Nobles—Triumph of Prince John of Lancaster—The Archbishop of York is taken Prisoner—upright Conduct of Gascoigne—the Prelate is beheaded—Northumberland implores Aid from France and Scotland—Reduction of Berwick—The Confederates fly to Wales—Depression of Owen Glendor's Fortunes—Refusal of the Parliament to grant Supplies—Rebellion again breaks forth in the North—Battle of Brenham Moor—Death of Bardolph and Northumberland—Advantages gained by the House of Commons—Henry's Subserviency to the Clergy—their persecuting Spirit—Accession of Henry V.—Youthful Follies of the King—Re-interment of Richard II.—Martial Temper of the King—Melancholy Situation of Charles VI.—Faction in France—Henry claims the Crown of France—Acquiescence of Edward Mortimer—Negotiation with France—Liberal Grant of the Parliament—The King determines to appeal to the Sword—Discovery of Treason—Execution of Cambridge and Scroope—Departure of the Expedition—Capture of Harfleur—Henry V.'s hazardous March—Battle of Azincourt—Defeat of the French—Anecdotes of the Battle—Joy of the English—Henry's Reception in England—his prosperous Fortune—Assassination of the Duke of Burgundy—Henry appointed Regent of France—Inhuman Execution of Lord Cobham—Zeal of the Lollards—Death of Henry.

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HENRY at a great council which he held at St. Alban's had the mortification to find his nobles generally adverse to his wishes. Lord Bardolph, one of the most strenuous of his opponents, hastened to

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the Earl of Northumberland, who notwithstanding the late clemency which he had received was easily tempted to renew hostilities. The Earl of Westmorland's appointment to be Mareschal of England offended the son of the late Duke of Norfolk, in whose family that office was even then hereditary; he expressed his indignation to Scroop, Archbishop of York, and found in him a willing auditor. This prelate was brother to the Earl of Wiltshire, the friend and minister of Richard II., and one of the earliest sacrifices to Henry's love of popularity, being taken in Bristol castle and executed without a trial by the king's order.

The public clamour against the king for irreligion, extortion, and an illegal stretch of power in the execution of many clergymen and gentlemen, afforded the archbishop a pretext to demand the reformation of various abuses. A firm supporter of the Earl of March he had not scrupled to exhort Henry to repent of his treason and perjury to Richard; and had told the Earl of Northumberland that all those who were instrumental in raising Bolingbroke to that eminence which had enabled him to depose a king and seize upon his crown, were bound in justice to the real heir to drive him from the throne which he had usurped. Nevertheless, he now protested that his only aim was to induce the king to reign according to law, and to restore harmony amid contending nobles.

Respected for his great age, his superior learning, and the tried integrity of a long life, the prelate's accession to the malecontent party gave weight and dignity to their cause; and his union with the Earl

of Northumberland, the Lord Bardolph and the Earl Mareschal produced a new insurrection; the northern districts again appeared in arms, and preparations were made for the commencement of a civil war; but "the plot was too light for the counterpoise of so great an opposition." The rising was neither simultaneous or well arranged; Sir John Falconberg and three other knights with their adherents, who first shewed themselves on the field, were cut to pieces and dispersed by Prince John of Lancaster and the Earl of Westmorland. The Archbishop of York and the Earl Mareschal had assembled eight thousand men at Shipton on the Moor, May 29. near York, and over these the royal commanders prevailed by stratagem; they drew up their army at some distance, and requested a conference with the leaders of the insurgents, which was granted:* and the two parties met in an open space between their respective forces. The archbishop rehearsed the grievances which obliged himself and his friends to fly to arms, and deceived by a shew of moderation on the part of his auditors, expressed his desire to obtain redress without the effusion of blood. CHAP. VIII.

The manner in which the Earl of Westmorland contrived to gain the aged prelate's confidence is variously reported. Some writers aver that he persuaded him to disband his followers as the only means of soothing the king's resentment, whom he represented as not unwilling to grant the prayer of the petitioners upon the performance of this act of obedience. Others say that he guaranteed at once the king's consent to the proposed reformation of

* Parliament Rolls.

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the state; but all agree respecting the issue of the interview. The persons of the archbishop and the earl-mareschal were seized and conveyed to the hostile army; and upon the captivity of their leaders the retainers took the alarm, and each man speeding to his own home for security the field was lost without a blow.*

Henry with his usual activity repaired to the scene of action the instant that the rumour of the northern insurrection had reached the capital. The archbishop and the earl-mareschal were presented to him at Pontefract; he caused them to be removed to Bishopsthorpe, a palace belonging to the primate, whither he also proceeded, and he there directed the
June 8. chief justice Gascoigne to pass sentence of death upon the prisoners. Gascoigne, renowned for his inflexible adherence to the laws, steadily refused; alleging, that he had no power over the life of an ecclesiastic unless he had been previously deprived of his clerical dignities, and declaring also that both the archbishop and the earl-mareschal had a right to be tried by their peers before they could be adjudged worthy of death. A less scrupulous minister was found in a knight of the name of Fulthorpe, who waiving the ceremony of a trial condemned them to lose their heads. The venerable prelate manifested a truly christian spirit at his execution: he solemnly denied that he had intended evil to the person of the king, and desired the spectators to pray that his death might not be avenged upon the monarch and his friends. His piety and fortitude upon the scaffold moved the hearts of the people, who now

* Parliament Rolls.

looked upon him as a martyr, and the king deemed it expedient not to press the assembled peers in parliament to stigmatize his memory and that of his fellow-sufferer the earl-mareschal with the name of traitor. CHAP. VIII.

Henry at the head of thirty thousand men marched forward in quest of Northumberland; the earl, unequal to cope with a force so greatly his superior, endeavoured to strengthen himself by an alliance with Scotland, and wrote to the Duke of Orleans, earnestly entreating assistance from the court of France. He delivered the town of Berwick to the Scots; but they were unable to defend it. On the approach of the royal army they set it on fire and withdrew; and the earl, who, notwithstanding his factious spirit, ever shewed himself attentive to his own safety, accompanied their retreat, together with Lord Bardolf. The castle under the command of Lord Greystock made a faint resistance; but a shot from an immense piece of ordnance having shattered one of the towers, the besieged in great terror threw open the gates, and the captain and the chief officers of the garrison were executed on the spot. Henry reduced the whole border to obedience, and returned triumphantly to the south.

The English insurgents after the failure of their enterprize found little security in the court of Scotland; apprehensive of being delivered into the hands of their enemy they withdrew secretly into Wales, where there still remained a hope of renewing the war against Henry; again were they disappointed, the affairs of Owen Glendor in consequence of the vigorous campaigns and untiring perseverance of

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the Prince of Wales were on the decline, and the exiles compelled to wander from place to place in disguise were obliged to have recourse to the most extreme caution to defeat the vigilance of the king, unceasing in his endeavours to get possession of their persons. From their hidden retreats they watched the signs of the times, anxiously trying to avail themselves of public discontent to raise fresh commotions in the realm.

1407. Henry found his parliament refractory; instead of granting money, the commons remonstrated with unwonted boldness on the state of the kingdom, and the monarch only subdued their obstinacy by detaining them from their own homes, until weary of the inconvenience which they sustained they gave an ungracious vote for a subsidy, coupled with a strong and most unpalatable recommendation to retrench the expenses of his household. The hopes of the Earl of Northumberland were revived by the increasing murmurs of the people; after the lapse of two years he suddenly appeared in the north with Lord Bardolf, the companion of his exile. The name of Percy was still all-powerful in its ancestral dominions, and the tenants of that noble house flocked to the standard of their banished lord. The rebels surprised and obtained possession of several castles; their numbers augmented at every step, and they were joined by Sir Nicholas Tempest at Knaresborough, a gentleman who had previously taken up arms in the train of the Archbishop of York. Success for a brief period marked their progress; it was followed by total defeat. Sir Thomas Rokeby the sheriff of the county at the head of a

body of tried soldiers hung upon their rear, and advancing upon them as his strength increased, gave them battle at Bramham-Moor near Tadcaster; he obtained an easy victory over a confused assembly of undisciplined peasants whom he opposed with men experienced in the art of war. Northumberland fell fighting bravely in the field; Lord Bardolf was taken alive yet mortally wounded, and before the scaffold could be prepared his troubled spirit fled.* Henry sent the mangled quarters of the two lords to different cities, to appal the disaffected, and imposed heavy fines upon their adherents, which came opportunely to recruit his exhausted treasury; and the constant disappointment which followed every attempt on the part of his enemies to disturb his government produced the usual effect of establishing the authority of the crown. The partizans of the Earl of March were effectually silenced; and the young earl remained in hopeless captivity until the death of Bolingbroke, which happened in 1413.

1408. Feb. 23.

Mar. 2.

Although necessarily compelled to take a very brief review of the events of the reign of Henry IV. two circumstances not immediately connected with the affairs of the Mortimers, which occurred in it, must not escape our notice. Raised to the throne by the election of the people, and confirmed in his defective title by the parliament, the commons to whom Henry owed the preservation of his authority obtained a ratification of their most valuable privileges. Continually obliged to apply to them for money, they were not slow in perceiving their own importance, and not only established their right

* Parliament Rolls.

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to be the sole medium for raising supplies between the king and the people, but claimed the freedom of debate; and by defining the law of election deprived the crown of that influence which had been so often perniciously displayed in the illegal return of members by sheriffs devoted to the reigning monarch.

Henry's politic concessions, though in this instance so wise and beneficial, must not however be attributed to true patriotism; his own private interest induced him to bend to circumstances, and the same motive which deterred him from irritating the parliament, even when their petitions were the most distasteful to him, rendered him the tool of an intolerant priesthood, and kindled those dreadful fires which were to be quenched only by oceans of the blood of martyrs. Educated in more liberal principles by John of Ghent, who still adhering to the faith of Rome, yet advocated the cause of religious liberty, and by protecting Wickliffe and his followers enabled them to promulgate their opinions in security and peace, Henry IV. purchased the attachment of the clergy by an enormous grant of power, in allowing them to let loose the spirit of persecution upon all who dared to judge for themselves, at a period when by steadily maintaining the right of those who were opposed to the unchristian practices of a corrupt church, he would have deprived the priesthood of their usurped dominion over the bodies and souls of men, and prevented those barbarous executions which were the disgrace of England for so many succeeding years. Neither was this slavish submission to ecclesiastical tyranny absolutely requi-

site to ensure the safety of his crown; the disciples of Wickliffe were numerous in England, and the same vigour and resolution which marked the conduct of Bolingbroke upon other occasions, would, if exerted in the diffusion of light, have prevented that blind submission to a bigot creed, which so effectually retarded the progress of refinement in a nation plunged into the darkest superstition by the terror of the secular arm.

Henry IV. lately the idol of all ranks and classes, died unregretted by his subjects; yet was the House of Lancaster so securely seated upon the throne, that his eldest son succeeded him without a single voice being raised in favour of the Earl of March, a circumstance the more remarkable since the wild follies of Harry of Monmouth's early days, had filled the nation with distrust of a prince, who, to a soldier's desperate valour added a lawless devotion to low debauchery. The scenes in Eastcheap so faithfully delineated by Shakspeare from the authorities of the old chronicles of England are familiar to every body. The witty pranks of the prince, the loud revel which brought the sheriff with "a most monstrous watch to the door," and the dissolute courses of the heir-apparent's profligate companions, although opposed to every correct idea of manners and morality, cannot fail to charm the imagination and interest it in favour of a king who so nobly redeemed the vices of his youth; yet with all our predisposition to admire the mad wag of the Boar's Head, and the gallant conqueror of Azincourt, the study of Henry's character upon the page of history whilst it dazzles us with its splendour is painful and

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revolting to the feelings, and we turn with horror from the cruelties which he perpetrated both abroad and at home. Nevertheless it must be admitted that Henry displayed generous and noble qualities which must always command the esteem of posterity. One of the first acts of the new king's reign restored him to the confidence of his people; he dismissed the riotous crew who had hitherto been the companions of his wanton sports, not, says Hall, though banished from his presence, unrewarded or unpreferred, and replaced them by the wise and virtuous portion of his father's court. He liberated the Earl of March from confinement and treated him rather as a friend than a rival. He restored the heir of Percy to the titles and estates of his ancestors, and endeared himself to the nation by a gracious act towards the mouldering remains of Richard II. He caused the body of that luckless prince to be removed from its obscure grave at Langley, and reinterred it with suitable pomp in a magnificent tomb by the side of his first consort Queen Ann, testifying the sincerity of his attachment to the unfortunate monarch by following the funeral procession as chief mourner.

Henry early trained to war, and already having distinguished himself in the campaigns in Wales, strongly participated in the martial ardour which constituted the most esteemed quality in every class of society.

The troubles in which the neighbouring kingdom of France was unhappily involved, offered facilities for conquest which were too tempting to be resisted by an ambitious and warlike prince. A mutual hatred

had for a long period existed between the two countries, the triumphs of Edward III. were remembered by both, and the French had only been prevented by their divisions at home, from endeavouring to wipe off the stain of Crecy and Poictiers, and to punish the English nation for the part it had taken against Richard II. to whose cause they were bound by the ties of friendship and of kindred.

The tragical fate of his son-in-law had plunged Charles VI. into a paroxysm of frenzy, a return of a very afflicting disorder which had broken out though not so violently before. 'The Orleans and Burgundian factions had taken advantage of the monarch's incapacity to attend to public affairs to contend for the supremacy;' the kingdom was shaken to the very centre by their intestine jars, and the assassination of the Duke of Orleans by his rival paved the way to more dreadful scenes of blood and slaughter. The infuriated partizans of the murdered duke crushed for a time again exalted themselves. The reins of government were alternately seized by the Armagnacs, his followers, the Burgundians, and the dauphin, an impetuous self-willed prince, unequal to the trust and unable to keep the ascendance or over-rule an insolent populace, who in turn usurped dominion and were subdued by the Duke of Orleans, a leader more intent upon avenging himself upon the House of Burgundy than anxious for the restoration of order. 1414.

It was at this juncture that Henry V. boldly asserted his title to the crown, claiming it as the descendant of Edward III. It will be remembered that this monarch assumed a right to the throne of

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France through the female line in defiance of the salique law, and therefore admitting his claim to be just. Henry V. in upholding it virtually acknowledged the superior title of the Earl of March, who through Philippa daughter of the Duke of Clarence, was Edward's legitimate representative: it being only by the introduction of a similar law in England that Henry could hope (though his own sword might keep it in his lifetime) to maintain his family upon the throne.

Edmund Mortimer however either depressed by long confinement and the consciousness of his own feebleness, or too grateful for the kindness which he had received to advance his pretensions, remained silent, and the French court disdaining even to take notice of a demand so insulting, refused to make it the subject of discussion.

Henry's second requisition was little less extravagant than the first; he consented to waive his claim to the crown upon receiving immediate possession of the provinces of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, the territories which anciently composed the duchy of Aquitaine, and the several towns and counties included in the great peace of Bretigni, stipulating also for one half of Provence, as the inheritance of two of the four daughters of Berenger, formerly sovereign of that country, and married to Henry III. of England, and Richard his brother; he likewise called upon the king of France to discharge the arrears of ransom of king John, amounting to twelve hundred thousand crowns, and demanded the hand of his daughter the princess Catharine in marriage with a portion of two millions of crowns.*

* Rymer.

The miserable situation of France, and the danger of provoking so powerful an enemy, inclined the government to offer very advantageous terms of peace, whilst they refused to comply with these humiliating conditions. The Duke of Berri on the part of Charles professed himself willing to restore the territories which were formerly attached to the duchy of Aquitaine, and to give the princess Catharine to the King of England, with a dowry of six hundred thousand crowns.

Had Henry sincerely desired to terminate the negotiation amicably he would have accepted these proposals; but panting for conquest, his eagerness to immortalize himself by deeds of arms rendered him regardless of the difficulties which might be opposed to him, and undeterred by the peril of the enterprize, should the interest of France prevail over private feeling, and the nobility make common cause against the invader, he recalled his ambassadors and commenced a vigorous preparation for war.

An immense grant of the parliament in aid of his design, spread consternation throughout the adjacent realm, and induced Henry to offer new conditions. He relinquished the demand of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, and now asked only one million of crowns as the portion of the princess.

The Duke of Berri consented to increase the dowry from six to eight hundred thousand crowns, but refused to make any other alteration in the terms originally stipulated by the French government, and the King of England upon receiving this answer declared his intention to recover his inheritance by arms publicly in council.

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Edmund Mortimer was amid the nobles who offered their support and services to their sovereign upon this occasion; he accompanied the monarch to Southampton, at which place the English troops were assembled, and during their embarkation he became involved in a transaction of a very dangerous nature. It is impossible at this period of time to unravel the mazes of a plot which has been so obscurely related by the elder historians, we only know that the king received intelligence of the existence of a conspiracy formed by the Earl of Cambridge his cousin, and brother of the Duke of York, Sir Thomas Grey and the Lord Scroope for the purpose of compassing the monarch's dethronement and death, and of proclaiming the Earl of March as the rightful sovereign. Some authors have attributed this design to the bribes of Charles VI., prompted by terror to so base an expedient to rid himself of a formidable enemy; others suppose that the Earl of Cambridge who had married Anne Mortimer, sister of the Earl of March, was stimulated by the expectation of securing the inheritance of the kingdom to his heirs in the event of Edmund Mortimer's decease without issue.* The manner in which Henry became acquainted with the traitorous design against his life is also variously related. It having been gravely asserted that the Earl of Cambridge and his coadjutors confided the secret to the Earl of March, and that he revealed it to the king; but the only evidence to prove his knowledge of the plot is contained in the confession of the Earl of Cambridge, who charged his brother-in-law with

* Hall.

giving his consent to the project, and the doubtful testimony of a pardon, granted in all probability upon the entire conviction of his innocence, to secure him from future calumny and impeachment, a precaution of which the most guiltless in these dangerous times have been known to avail themselves. Edmund Mortimer sate at the trial as a judge, and from the undiminished favour which he enjoyed during the whole of Henry's reign, we may more justly infer that he was not in the slightest degree implicated in a scheme which would have taught the most generous monarch to regard him with suspicion. The trial and the execution of the conspirators was hastened by the anxiety of the king for the commencement of hostilities with France, and quitting Southampton with the first favourable wind he invested Harfleur, which surrendered after a fruitless struggle of five weeks. CHAP. VIII. Aug. 13.

The enemy in the interim had raised an army of one hundred thousand strong, whilst the soldiers under Henry were diminished by disease. No consideration of prudence however could damp the ardour of an ambitious warrior; though secure of a safe passage by sea, he determined to march across the country to Calais in defiance of the tremendous force which the late promoters of civil dissensions now animated by one impulse had brought into the field: and confiding in their numbers, impelled by a noble yet rash valour, and thirsting to annihilate the King of England and his followers at a single blow, the French commanders forgot the lesson of caution which Crecy should have taught them, and instead of wasting the strength of their adversaries and re- Sept. 26.

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ducing them by fatigue and famine, they allowed them the chance of a rescue from their forlorn condition by the hazard of a battle.

This engagement so glorious to the English arms took place on the 9th of October.* The French army under the command of the Constable D'Albret was drawn up in three divisions; aware that the frantic impetuosity with which their forefathers rushed upon the enemy had lost the neighbouring field of Crecy, he restrained the fierce impatience of his soldiers and obliged them to await the attack. The thin ranks of the English, mustering only files of four men deep, whilst those of their adversaries amounted to the appalling superiority of thirty, were formed in similar order, and Henry disappointed in his expectation of receiving the first assault of the French, commanded the archers to advance. Each man was provided with a stake, and shouting the battle cry they pressed forwards with cool intrepidity; planted their stakes into the ground, and winging their arrows through the air retired to take breath behind the wooden rampart they had formed, from whence they kept up an incessant shower of these murderous weapons. A select battalion of eight hundred men at arms appointed by the constable to disperse the assailants, advanced to the charge; the leaders fell in heaps before the thick flying darts, and those who followed, turning their heads to avoid certain destruction, lost the command of their horses, and the goaded animals becoming wild and unmanageable broke into D'Albret's closest ranks, and spread confusion throughout the whole

* Monstrelet.

division. Before the French had time to recover themselves, the English archers slinging their bows behind their backs rushed onwards to the assault sword and battle-axe in hand, penetrating to the very centre, and making such fearful slaughter that the constable was killed, and the entire body in an incredibly short space of time dispersed or cut to pieces. CHAP. VIII.

Henry at the head of his men at arms directed the archers to form again, and led them up to the second division; the Frenchmen though checked and dispirited valiantly repelled the attack, and victory for two hours remained doubtful. Continually exposed to the most imminent peril, Henry at one time bestrode the prostrate body of his brother the Duke of Clarence, who had been struck wounded to the ground, and at another sustained the charge of eighteen French knights, a devoted band, bound by oath to each other to seize the king's person either dead or alive, and who fell a sacrifice to their temerity, being instantly annihilated by Henry's faithful guard. A last effort was made by the Duke of Alençon to secure the field; cutting his way to the royal standard he cleaved the golden crown which encircled the English monarch's helmet. Henry's followers raised their weapons, the duke surrounded on all sides, exclaimed "I yield! I am Alençon!" but before the generous monarch could interpose to save him he was struck dead upon the earth, and his fall became the signal of flight to the shattered remains of his army. The flower of the French nobility perished in this bloody encounter, whilst the loss on the English part was comparatively

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trifling. The Duke of York terminated his turbulent but inglorious career in a splendid grave; and by his gallant bearing wiped off the stain of cowardice which had been cast upon him. No other name of note except that of the Earl of Suffolk appears upon the list of the slain, and the whole amount of the English dead did not exceed sixteen hundred men.

Biondi, in narrating the conduct of the French and English in their respective camps, previous to the battle of Azincourt, mentions signs and omens which were afterwards considered to have been prophetic of the melancholy fate of that vast armament, the pride and glory of France, assembled to confront the thin ranks of the invaders. "The King," (Henry V. says our author) "marching at leisure, came in three days to Blagni, where understanding that the enemy was encamped at Azencourt, he encamped himself at Maisoncelles, not above three bow shootes from them, where his souldiers, half dead with hunger, wearied and frozen to death (for they had not time to provide for fewell), spent all the night in confession, communion and other spiritual exercises, as if it were the last night they were to live, so as their souls' comfort much encouraged them, the which they witnessed by the continual museake of their trumpets, which never ceased to sound till the breake of day, whilst the French camp, put up with confidence, and buried in sleep, buried all their mirth in silence; the very horses not so much as neighing, so as some of them fuller of imagination than the rest, tooke it as an ill omen; it being almost incredible that in the number of one hundred and fifty thousand horse, which were then

in the army, what for carts, waggons, artillery and other warre affaires, there should want instruments to outdo the tantaraes of the enimies contemptible camp, or at least voices to drown them."* Anticipating an easy conquest, the French knights amused themselves with playing at dice for their prisoners, and it is said that, relying fearlessly upon the persuasion that a signal victory awaited their triumphant arms, they were upon the point of resolving to exclude the common soldiers from a share in their laurels, and to permit none save those who had won their golden spurs, to take part in the engagement.† They provided a chariot for the conveyance to Paris of the monarch whom they intended to capture, and agreed upon the division of the spoils of the English camp: yet we are told that a few of the French commanders, struck with superstitious dread at the unusual scarcity of instruments of martial music in so vast an armament, and the dead silence, which prevailed throughout the extensive lines, entertained melancholy forebodings of defeat and death.

Henry of England, though rejoicing at the prospect of a battle which could alone cut a passage for his way-worn troops to Calais was not blind to the imminent peril which surrounded him. Anxious and doubtful of the possibility of a successful termination of the morrow's combat, the close vicinity of the hostile camp enabled him to dispatch Captain David Gam, a valiant Welchman, who formed a part of his body guard, to reconnoitre and report the strength of the enemy. This brave soldier nothing

* Civill Warres of England. † Goodwin.

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daunted by the almost countless hosts who only waited the early dawn to commence their deadliest operations, gallantly remarked, that "There were enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away:" and the King animated by this spirited answer felt that with such soldiers he might defy the utmost power of France.

Anger, we are told, at the sight of the dead body of the Duke of York, was one of the causes which urged the King of England to issue the disastrous order for the slaughter of his prisoners, which sullied the triumph of Azincourt's well-earned field:* a deed of vengeance not justified by the merits of the slain; for the Duke of York's shameful apostacy and treachery to all his friends had raised the indignation of Europe. The gallant St. Pol, whose bold accusations and stern defiances severely mortified the conscious Bolingbroke, openly displayed his contempt and scorn of the "traitor Rutland," by hanging him in effigy before the gates of Calais, at the period in which he sent that memorable challenge to Henry IV., who learned in the bitter enmity of his former associate, that in gaining the crown of England he had lost the esteem of the valiant and the good. The Duke of York would have fallen into utter contempt but for the attachment with which he was regarded by Henry of Monmouth: he served under him when Prince of Wales, in a campaign against Glendor, and being charged in Parliament with cowardice, this generous friend warmly repelled the aspersion. He was not unskilful in the art of war, and the stakes which

* Baker.

were found to be so serviceable at Azincourt* and succeeding battles are said to have been adopted at his suggestion. Anxious to "prove that he had been slandered by the calumnious assertions of his enemies, he requested to be placed in the front division of the English army, and being (says our author) a fat man, by much heat and thronging, he was smothered to death."*

The intelligence of Henry's dazzling triumph over the chivalry of France, was received in England with the most lively joy and gratitude.† "On the twenty-ninth of October, (we are told, early in the morning) comes tydynges to London while that men weren there beddes, that the Kyng hadde foughton and hadde the bataille, and the feld aforsaid. And assoon as they hadde tydynges thereof they wrote to alle the cherches in the citee of London, and rongon alle the belles of every cherche, and solemnely alle the prestes of every cherche, and othere men that were lettered, songen *Te Deum Laudamus, &c.* And agens ix of the belle were warned all the ordres of relygeous men of the citee of London, for to go a procession fro Seynt Poules unto Seynt Edward Schryne at Westm'. And the new maire and hise aldermen, with alle the craftes of London, and the quen (the widow of Henry IV.) with alle here lordes also wente from Seynt Poules unto Westm', and offred at Seynt Edwardes schryne aforesaid, or the meire tok his charge; and whanne the meire hadde taken his charge, every man come rydyng hom fro Westm' on horsbak, and were joyful and glad for the goode tydynges that they hadde of the Kyng,

* Dugdale. † Chronicle of London.

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and thankyd oure Lord J'hu Crist, his modir Seynt Marye and Seynt George, and alle the holy company of hevene, and seyde *Hec est dies quam fecit d'n's.*"

Already in full possession of the hearts of his subjects, the signal victory achieved by Henry at Azincourt, inspired the English people with an attachment amounting to idolatry to their young and gallant sovereign. When the ship in which Henry had embarked from Calais approached the coast, the crowd assembled on the shore, immediately as the dauntless conqueror drew near, plunged into the sea to meet and welcome him and dragged his bark to land amidst loud and repeated acclamations. The King's triumphant journey to the English capital is described at length by a contemporary historian, who informs us that on Wednesday the morrow after the festival of St. Simon and St. Jude, Henry arrived at Calais, and on the Saturday after the feast of St. Martin, the nobles taken in the campaign having assembled according to their covenant, he sailed for England with his prisoners. "Our oldest men,"* exclaims the enthusiastic panegyrist, "do not remember any prince who ever governed his army throughout an expedition with more prudence, vigour and manfulness, or who achieved such deeds of arms in the field. Yea, neither is found in chronicles or annals that any King of England of whom our ancient writings make mention, ever

* For this very interesting account of the pomp and pageantry with which Henry V. was ushered into London, the author is indebted to the kindness of Nicholas Harris Nicolas, Esq. F. S. A. and she can only regret that her acquaintance with him commenced at too late a period to permit her to avail herself of his obliging offer of a perusal of the proof-sheets of his forthcoming work upon the battle of Azincourt.

executed so many deeds in so short a time, and returned home with so great and so glorious a triumph. To the only God be the honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. CHAP. VIII.

"The king," continues our author, "having enjoyed one day's rest at the port of Dover, took his march through Canterbury over the holy threshholds of the churches of that metropolis and at St. Augustine, to his manor of Eltham; proposing on the following sabbath to honour the city of London with his actual presence. Now the citizens having heard the most desirable, yea, most delightful reports of his arrival, in the mean time prepared themselves and the city as much as time permitted, for the reception of their most beloved and longed-for prince whom God had so magnificently and miraculously of his graciousness led back with triumph to his own country, from a rebellious and invincible people. And when the wished-for sabbath dawned, the citizens went forth to meet the king as far as the heights of Blakeheth; viz. the mayor and xxiiii aldermen in scarlet and the rest of the inferior citizens in red suits, with party-coloured hoods, red and white, on about xx thousand horses, all of whom according to their crafts had certain finely contrived devices, which notably distinguished each craft from the other. And when about the tenth hour of day, the king had come through the middle of them, and the citizens had given glory and honour to God, and congratulations and thanks to the king, for the victory obtained and for his labours for the state, the citizens advanced forward towards the city, the king following with his own but small retinue. And that

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the pen may record something of the praise and embellishment of the city and the splendid entertainments of so many noble citizens. When they had come to the tower at the approach to the bridge as it were at the entrance to the authorities of the city, there was erected on the top of the tower a gigantic statue of amazing magnitude, which looking upon the king's face, bore as if a champion a great axe in his right hand, but held in his left as porter the keys of the city hanging on a staff; and at his right side stood a female not much less in size clad in a scarlet mantle and a woman's ornaments, as if man and wife, who arrayed in finer apparel might see the face of their lord and receive him with full praise. But around them banners of the royal arms adorned the tower elevated on the turrets; and trumpets, clarions and horns sounded in various melody. And in front there was this elegant and fit inscription upon the wall; CIVITAS REGIS JUSTICIE; *The city of the King of righteousness.* And as they proceeded nearer the bridge, there was on each side a little before it a lofty column in imitation of a little tower, no less ingenious than elegant, built of wood which was covered over with linen cloth painted the colour of white marble and green jaspar, as though of stones squared and cut by a stone-cutter; on the top of the right hand column, stood an erect figure of an antelope having a shield with the splendid royal arms suspended from his neck, and holding the royal sceptre extended in his right foot; and on the top of the other column was an image of a lion erect, bearing on high in his right claws a partizan with the royal standard unfurled. Over the foot of the

bridge across the road was raised a tower worked and painted like the said columns; in the middle of which under a splendid pavilion stood a most beautiful image of Saint George, armed excepting his head, which was adorned by a laurel wreath studded with pearls, shining with what seemed precious stones, having behind his back a crimson tapestry, with arms glittering in a multitude of shields. And on his right hung his triumphal helmet, and on his left a shield of arms of suitable magnitude. In his right hand he held the hilt of the sword with which he was girded, and in his left a roll extended along the turrets, containing these wosds: SOLI DES HONOR ET GLORIA, (*To God alone honour and glory.*) And this prophetical congratulation was inserted in front of the tower. *The stream of the river gladdens the city of God:* and halberds bearing the king's arms impaled, adorned as above, projecting at the awning and turrets. And in a contiguous house behind the tower, were innumerable boys representing the angelic host arrayed in white, and with countenances shining with gold, and glittering wings and virgin locks, set with precious sprigs of laurel, who at the king's approach, bowing to the ground, sang with melodious voices and with organs this English anthem.

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" 'And they sent forth upon him round leaves of silver mixed with wafers, equally thin and round, with wine out of channels and pipes of the conduit, that they might receive him with bread and wine as Melchisedeck received Abraham returning with victory from the slaughter of the four kings.' Then having proceeded further to the cross of Chepe,

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the cross was not to be seen, but as it were a very fair castle around it, which constructed of wood with no less ingenuity than elegance was ornamented by towers, beautiful columns, and bastions in elegant assemblage, having on each side arches almost as high as a spear and a half, each of which at one extremity artfully supported the castle, and at the other extending forth over the street immerged into the neighbouring buildings as if it grew out of them. Under which in a sufficiently ample space to the breadth of one spear's length the people rode as through two gates. And there was written on the fronts of the gates on each side, GLORIOSA DICTA SUNT DE TE CIVITAS DEI (*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God;*) its covering consisted of a linen awning, and painting of the colours of white marble, and of green and crimson jaspar, as if the whole had been cemented together of squared and well-polished stones. The arms of Saint George adorned the summit of the castle and the lower tower, and in one part were the king's arms, and in the other the emperor's projecting on halberds, and the lower turrets had the arms of the royal and of the greater peers of the realm. From the middle of the castle towards the king issued a very fair portal not less ingeniously constructed, from which was extended a wooden bridge, as it were fifteen (stadia) of good breadth, and reaching from the ground to a man's waist for the sake of seeing, covered and deckt with tapestry, with posts and barriers on each side ornamentally and securely enough for avoiding the pressure of the people; and upon this bridge there went forth out of the castle

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to meet the king a chorus of most beautiful virgins elegantly attired in white and virgin dress, singing with timbrel and dance as to another David coming from the slaughter of Goliath, who might be conveniently intended in the haughtiness of the French, this song of congratulation, bowing to the ground, 'WELCOME HENRY THE FIFTE KYNGE OF ENGLOND AND OF FRANCE.' From the top to the bottom of the castle, in the towers, bastions, arches and columns were innumerable boys, as it were the archangelic and angelic multitude, decked with celestial gracefulness, white apparel, shining feathers, virgin locks studded with gems and other resplendent and most elegant array, who sent forth upon the head of the king passing beneath crowns of gold, with boughs of laurel; singing with one accord to the honour of the Almighty God with sweet melody of voice and with organs this angelic hymn, bowing to the ground, 'TE DEUM LAUDAMUS, TE DEUM CONFITEMUR,' &c. '*We praise thee O God, we acknowledge thee to be our Lord.*' And having come to the tower of the conduit in the going out of Chepe towards Saint Paul's, there surrounded that tower about the middle many artificial pavilions, and in each pavilion was a most beautiful virgin girl after the manner of an image, decorated with very elegant ornaments of modesty, all of them being crowned with laurel, girt with golden girdles, and having cups of gold in their hands, from which they blew out with most gentle breath, scarcely perceptible, round leaves of gold upon the king's head when he passed beneath them. But the tower was covered over with a canopy of the colour of the sky, with clouds interwoven and

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heaped up with much art, the summit of which was ornamented by the image of an archangel, as if of most lucid gold, with other more brilliant colours resplendently variegated. And the four posts which supported the canopy were borne by four angels of not inferior workmanship; beneath the canopy on a throne was a majestic image representing the sun, that with the shining rays it emitted glittered above all things; round about which angels shone with celestial gracefulness chaunting sweetly, and in all sorts of music, bowing to the ground.

"And there ornamented the bastions of the tower * * * * * projecting on posts. And that the tower in its inscription might seem to conform with the preceding praises of the inscriptions to the honour and glory of God, not of men, it bore to the view of the passengers this conclusion of praise, DEO GRACIAS, (*Thanks to God*). And besides the pressure in the standing-places, and of men crowding through the streets, and the multitude of persons of both sexes looking out of windows and apertures, however narrow, along the way from the bridge, so great was the pressure of the people in Chepe from one end to the other that scarcely the horsemen (and not without difficulty) could ride through them. And the lattices and windows on both sides were filled with the more noble ladies and women of the realm, and with honourable and honoured men, who flocked together to the pleasing sight, and were so very gracefully and elegantly dressed in garments of gold, fine linen and crimson and various other apparel, that a greater assembly or a nobler spectacle was not recollected to have been

ever before in London. The king himself amidst these public expressions of praise and the bravery of the citizens passed along clad in a purple robe, not with lofty looks, pompous cavalry or great multitude, but with a solid aspect, a reverend gait, and a few of his most faithful domestics attendant on him; the said dukes, earls and mareschall, his captives following him with a guard of soldiers. Even from the very silence of his countenance, his unassuming gait and sober advance, it might be gathered that the king secretly revolving the affair in his breast rendered thanks and glory to God alone and not to men. And when he had visited the church of the apostles Peter and Paul he turned aside to his palace of Westminster, the citizens leading him along.

"And when they were come further to the tower of the conduit in Cornehill, that tower was found decked with crimson cloth, spread out after the fashion of a tent, upon poles covered with the same cloth. Round about the middle of the tower below went the arms of Saints George, Edward, Edmund, and of England, in four more elevated places, with intermediate scutcheons of the royal arms; amongst which was inserted this inscription of pious import, QM REX SPERAT IN DENO ET IN MIA ALTISSIMI NON COMMOVEBITUR, (*Because the king hopeth in the Lord, and in the mercy of the most high, he shall not be moved*). But higher on the turrets the arms of the royal lineage were raised for ornament on halberds. Under the pavilion, indeed, was a company of prophets, for their venerable grey hair, dressed in golden coats and mantles, with their heads covered and wrapped in gold and crimson; who when the

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king came by them sent forth sparrows and other small birds in sufficient numbers, as a sacrifice agreeable to God, in return for the victory, and of which some alighted on the king's breast, some rested on his shoulders, and some fluttered round about him. And the prophets sang with a sweet harmony, bowing to the ground, this psalm of thanksgiving: 'Sing unto the Lord a new song, hallelujah! Because he hath done wonders, hallelujah! he hath saved, &c.' Thence they advanced to the tower of the conduit, in the entrance of the street of Chepe, which was hung with a green covering with scutcheons of the city arms, inserted and interwoven in gay assemblage, upon posts clad with the same colour, after the fashion of a building. And the turrets above the tower were ornamented with halberds of arms, projecting as in the other places, and its middle round about.

"And beneath the covering were men venerable from old age, in apostolic array and number, having the names of the twelve apostles written on their foreheads, together with the twelve kings, martyrs, and confessors, of the succession of England, their loins girded with golden girdles, sceptres in their hands, and crowns on their heads, the emblems of sanctity, and they chaunted with one accord at the king's approach with sweet harmony, bowing to the ground."

The whole of Henry's future reign exhibited one continued series of triumphs, and the historian of the house of Mortimer must search in vain through the chronicles of the time for information of interest connected with the Earl of March; they contain

only a brief record of his attachment to the king; apparently content with the privileges and honours attached to a prince of the blood, he never once swerved from his allegiance, returning the liberal policy of Henry with undeviating gratitude. The confidence so nobly reposed and so honourably repaid is equally creditable to both parties, and these generous heirs of Lancaster and Mortimer afford perhaps a solitary instance of perfect harmony existing between two persons so delicately placed.

We are not called upon to follow Henry in his career of foreign conquests, though we may pause to pay our humble tribute to his genius and his valour. Surrounded by a blaze of glory every march was a triumph. Surprised by his prowess, or subdued by his perseverance, city after city submitted to his arms. Wafted to the scene of his romantic exploits in a vessel whose sails were of purple and gold, splendour tracked his path, and the hero of a continual pageant we gaze with admiration and with wonder at achievements emulating the fabled stories of old, approaching the heroic deeds of our lion-hearted Richard, and surpassing those of our warlike Edwards. Fortune, frequently so treacherous to these gallant princes, never once deserted Henry. The most powerful combination formed by his enemies was broken by their jealousy and distrust of each other. Almost at the moment of reconciliation, the Duke of Burgundy was basely assassinated by the friends of the dauphin, and in the horror occasioned by this inhuman act the true interests of France were forgotten. The queen mother, infuriated by passion, and apprehensive of

1419.

Sept. 10.

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1420. June 2.

sharing in the common danger which threatened the Duke of Burgundy's partizans, sacrificed her son to her fears and her revenge. Henry was created regent and received the hand of the Princess Catharine in marriage, with the reversion of the crown on the demise of Charles VI.

Whilst affairs were in this prosperous condition abroad the transactions at home assumed a gloomy aspect. Sincerely attached to the Roman Catholic Church Henry, from conscientious motives as well as from policy, denied his subjects the right of choosing their own creed. His early friend the gallant Lord Cobham was delivered over to the flames, for his pertinacious adherence to the doctrines of Wickliffe; and the clergy, triumphing in the authority which empowered them to bring their adversaries to the stake, neglected the only means of effectually repressing the progress of Lollardy, as, after Walter Lollard, the German reformer, the new doctrine was then called, namely a reformation in the morals of the priesthood, whose scandalous lives brought disgrace upon the established religion. It must not be concealed in the meantime that the disciples of Wickliffe were not always content with the peaceable enjoyment of their own opinions. They were shocked by the monstrous superstitions of their brethren of Rome; and, with more zeal than discretion, waged war upon the images and ceremonies which excited their disgust. They were also (and not without some justice) charged with continual variation in the tenets which they professed, but their accusers have either inconsiderately or purposely overlooked the reason of this

apparent caprice. It was not at once that Wickliffe or his followers rejected all the errors which had been introduced into the Apostolic Church; but every new perusal of the scriptures discovered to them some tradition of man which had been imposed by priests and councils as the doctrines of God, and at the moment of conviction they expressed their abhorrence of that in which they had formerly professed to believe; the revelation of one great truth was followed by that of another, and it was only by degrees that the cumbrous superstructure which had superseded the simplicity of the gospel could be entirely removed. The zeal of the Lollards, like all other zeal of opponents of the established religion of a state, was productive of public disorder, and in transgressing the law even in the furtherance of a good cause they were doubtless justly obnoxious to punishment at the hands of the civil power. Many too of their persecutors like Henry himself were persuaded that they were obeying the commands of heaven in the extirpation of heresy; and others, infuriated by anger and blinded by self-interest, were betrayed into deeds of horror, in order to support the tottering foundation of a church whose very existence was threatened by the attacks of the reformers.

None of the kings of England had more effectually opposed the tyranny of Rome than Edward III. and Richard II.; the papal yoke was scarcely felt during the reign of these princes; but the house of Lancaster feared to provoke ecclesiastical thunders, and surrendered themselves willing slaves to pontifical

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authority, which regained the whole of its ancient power in England.

1422. Aug. 31.

Suddenly arrested in the midst of his brilliant career, the hand of death snatched the laurel and the diadem from the brows of Henry before he had realized half the ambitious dreams which haunted his soul with visions of glory: his imagination warmed by the grandeur of Richard Cœur-de-Lion's deeds, meditated conquests which should eclipse the splendour of the crusades. He panted to encounter infidels in a distant quarter of the globe, and to rescue the holy sepulchre from Turkish dominion.* The name of Jerusalem occurring in the psalms with which the officiating priests endeavoured to console the monarch in his dying moments, arrested his failing breath, and he disclosed to his mourning friends the romantic expectation which he had so fondly cherished. Descending to the grave in the full flush of manhood's prime, Henry left an infant son to the care of his illustrious brothers; and the decease of Charles VI. of France on the twenty-second of October in the same year, gave the crowns of two kingdoms to a child of nine months old.

* Monstrelet.

CHAPTER IX.

Dearth of amusing Events in the Reign of Henry IV.—Displeasure of Foreign Princes—Paternal Tenderness of Charles VI.—Hostility of the Count de St. Pol—Insult offered to the Earl of Rutland—Incursions of the Princes of France on the English Coast—Challenge of the Duke of Orleans—Henry's Reply—The King is charged with the Murder of Richard II.—Henry denies the allegation—Neutrality of the French Government—Lamentations of the Citizens of Bordeaux—Death of the Duke of Orleans—Affairs of Scotland—Anger of the Earl of March—Miserable Fate of Prince David—Captivity of James—Marriage of the King and of his two Daughters—Conduct of the Duke of Burgundy—Credulity of the Times—Strange Stories told to the prejudice of the King—Prophecies concerning his Death—Martyrdom of Sawtre—Character of Arundel—Gallantry of Sir John Cornwall—Various Equipments of Knights—Mail Armour—Plate Armour—Hanging Sleeves—Fantastic Attire of the Prince of Wales—Changes in Henry V.'s Character—his Piety—Misery at Rouen—Anecdotes of the King's Inhumanity—Tyranny exercised towards the Scottish Soldiers—Anecdote of the Queen Dowager—Riot in St. Dunstan's Church—The Penance performed by Lord Strange—The Emperor Sigismund—Speech of the Nobles—The Emperor's Conduct in France—Henry confers the Garter on his Guest—The Gifts bestowed by the Emperor on his Departure—Splendour of Henry's Ship—Orcleve's Poems—A Ballad of Lydgate's—The King's Attachment to Music and Literature—his extraordinary Swiftness—Description of Henry's Funeral Procession.

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THE stormy reign of Henry IV. presents few domestic occurrences of any interest. Conspiracies and dissensions occupy the pages of the old chro-

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nicles; and the gloomy impression made upon the mind by a continual series of revolts is seldom exchanged for the more entertaining narratives of tournaments and banquets, which enliven the annals of his luckless predecessor. Foreign princes beheld Henry Bolingbroke's violent assumption of the crown with horror; instead of the usual congratulations offered to a sovereign on his accession to the throne, execrations and defiances were poured upon him by surrounding nations; but peculiarly fortunate in the internal posture of affairs, both of France and of Scotland, those powers, generally the most hostile to England, were prevented from taking advantage of the disaffection of a large portion of the nobles in furtherance of their schemes of ambition or of vengeance. The indignation of France evaporated in empty threats. The parental solicitude of Charles VI. for the recovery of his daughter Isabel, whom he consented to receive without the part of her portion, two hundred thousand francs of gold, which had been granted at the period of her espousal with Richard, induced the irritated monarch to stifle his resentment; but he refused to enter into a friendly treaty with Henry, or to accept the crown of England for his daughter on the condition proposed, her marriage with the Prince of Wales; and though he did not in his own person violate the truce which it was the policy of the English government to maintain, he permitted the aggressions of his nobles.

From two of the princely vassals of France Henry sustained keener mortification. Valerian, Count of St. Pol, the friend and the kinsman of Richard II., by a matrimonial alliance with Matilda, half sister

of the King, sent a formal defiance into England, threatening to wage war both by land and by sea on the dominion of the usurper, in his own private quarrel, "and not on account of any hostilities between his dread and sovereign lord the King of France, and the realm of England."* The count also evinced his indignation at the perfidy of Rutland, by hanging the earl's effigy with the arms reversed like those of a traitor, before the gates of Calais, and executing the most daring of those menaces with which he had so boldly assailed the triumphant King, made a descent upon the Isle of Wight; and, joined by the Admiral of Bretagne and three princes of the house of Bourbon his confederates, burnt the town of Plymouth, and sweeping the narrow seas captured nearly two thousand prisoners, whom the victors carried with a large carrack and forty-nine smaller vessels into the ports of France.

The submission to these petty ravages was deeply humiliating to the pride of a king; but Henry was condemned to taste even a more bitter cup: his friend and companion the Duke of Orleans, who had solemnly sworn to be "a friend and well-wisher to his friends and well-wishers, an enemy to his enemies, and to love, pursue, keep and defend the health, the good, the honour and the estate" of his beloved ally against all adversaries, dissolved the bond of amity and challenged him to fight with a hundred knights on a side in the marches of Guienne. Henry replied to this insult with temperate dignity, evading rather than declining the challenge, by reminding his antagonist of the truce between the

* Monstrelet.

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two kingdoms, of their former oaths, and of the obligation of a crowned head not to condescend to engage in single combat with a person of inferior rank; yet in conclusion said, that he should repair to Guienne when it pleased him with such knights as he should choose to appoint, when the duke might meet him if he thought fit, and should receive the satisfaction which he deserved. This temperate answer provoked a second challenge, couched in terms still more offensive than the former: Orleans charged the King with rebellion, usurpation and
1403. murder. Henry made a slight attempt to vindicate himself from the two former of these injurious accusations, but reserved all the indignation of a generous spirit for the last: he boldly and solemnly denied having participated in the assassination of Richard.

"If you mean that we had any hand in his death, we say that you lie, and will lie falsely as often as you shall assert it: as the true God knows, whom we call to witness our innocence, offering as a loyal prince ought, our body against yours, if you will or dare to prove it."* The duel however never took place. Henry anxious to preserve the truce with France submitted to the insult, content with a vehement remonstrance through the medium of his ambassadors concerning the infraction of the armistice by the challenge of the Duke of Orleans. The French government refused to exert its authority to silence the insolent threat of Henry's adversary, and met the complaints from England with a cold and unsatisfactory reply. "Neither the King or his council have ever broken, nor will they ever break

* Monstrelet.

their engagements. This is the only answer that can be returned."

France was not in a condition to avail itself of the discontent of Guienne where the memory of the Black Prince, revered by the inhabitants, caused the most enthusiastic loyalty towards Richard II. The feelings of the citizens of Bourdeaux, the birth-place of that unfortunate monarch, are depicted in a very lively manner by Sir John Hayward; and the following quotation from his work will not only display the attachment of Richard's foreign subjects, but may amuse as a specimen of the curious style adopted by the elder historians: "O good God," (said they) "where is the world become? Saints are turned to serpents and doues into diuels. The English nation which hath been accompted fierce onely against their foes, and alwayes faithful to their friends, are now become both fierce and faithlesse against their lawfull and loving prince, and have most barbarouslie betrayed him. Who would ever have thought that Christians, that civill people, that any men would thus have violated all religion, all lawes and all honest and orderly demeanure? And although the heavens blush at the view, and the earth sweat at the burthen of so vile a villainie, and all men proclaime and exclaime vpon shame and confusion against them, yet they neither feele the horrour nor shrinke at the shame nor feare the revenge, but stand upon tearmes, some of defence for the lawfulnesse of their dealing and some of excuse for the necessitie. Well, let them be able to blinde the worlde, and to resist man's revenge, yet shall they never be able to escape eyther the sight or vengeance

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of Almighty God, which we dayly expect and earnestly desire to be powred vpon them. Alas! good King Richard, thy nature was too gentle and thy gouernment too milde for so stiffe and stubborne a people. What king wil euer repose any trust in such vnnaturell subiects, but fetter them with lawes as theeues are with irons? What carriage hereafter can recouer their credite? What time wyll bee sufficient to blotte out this blemish? What other action could they have doone more ioyfull to their enemyes, more woefull to their friendes, and more shamefull to themselves? Oh, corruption of times! Oh, conditions of men!"

Richard's champion and Henry's mortal enemy the Duke of Orleans was in the course of three years cut off by the sword of the assassin, and immediately the whole realm of France was thrown into inextricable confusion: and Henry though at first assisting the Duke of Burgundy against the Armagnacs, the partisans of the murdered prince, subsequently consulted his own interest by espousing the cause of the opposite faction, who in return acknowledged his right to the territory of Guienne.

The domestic transactions of Scotland were equally propitious to Henry. Robert III. the second prince of the family of Stuart, a monarch too gentle for the sovereignty of the fierce people who owned his sway, had retired in a great measure from active life, and committed the care of the kingdom to the hands of his brother the Duke of Albany, a bold and ambitious man. The extreme profligacy of the heir-apparent Prince David disgusted the nation and encouraged his uncle to aspire to the crown. The

prince had been affianced to the Lady Elizabeth Dunbar daughter of the Earl of March, and had received a part of her dowry; but Archibald the wealthy and powerful Earl of Douglas thirsting for an alliance with royalty, objected to the marriage, which he alleged had not received the sanction of the nobles, and offering his own daughter the Lady Margery with a larger portion, the prince became his son-in-law; and the Earl of March withdrawing in sullen wrath to England, revenged his quarrel by espousing the cause of Henry IV. against his own country.

In the mean time the increasing licentiousness of Prince David rendered him odious to the whole community; even the king his father shocked by his excesses consented to his imprisonment as the only means of effecting a reformation in conduct which had defied the efforts hitherto made to restrain the wildness of youth within decent bounds. The unfortunate and vicious prince was consigned to a dungeon, from whence it was not the interest of the Duke of Albany to permit him to escape; after a short confinement a report of his decease was rumoured abroad, and though ascribed by the government to a natural cause, the public voice asserted that he had been starved to death. The king justly alarmed by the fate of his eldest son, endeavoured to secure the younger from the evils which he feared might await him in Scotland, and determining to send him to complete his education at the court of his friend and ally Charles VI., the young prince embarked with a few attendants on board a vessel bound for France. But he was not

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permitted to reach his destination; happening to fall in with an English ship off Flamborough-head,* the inveterate enemies of Scotland violated the truce, and carried the fugitive and his train prisoners to London; where the king rejoiced at obtaining so valuable a prize, resolved upon his detention, ironically observing that he could speak French as well as his brother Charles, and was equally capable of educating a king of Scotland.† The Duke of Albany made no effort to procure the release of his kinsman, who was consigned to strict imprisonment; the death of the King of Scotland overpowered by the weight of his calamities occurred shortly afterwards, and the regent aware that the duration of his authority depended upon the captivity of the heir, studiously avoided all sources of dispute with the King of England, and permitted Henry to secure without molestation the throne which he had usurped.

Henry IV. contracted a second marriage with Joan of Navarre daughter of Charles II. King of Navarre and Count of Evreux, surnamed the *bad*, and Joan his wife, daughter of John King of France, by Bona of Luxemburgh his first wife; she was the third wife and widow of John Earl of Montfort, Duke of Bretagne, commonly called the *valiant*. It is said that the King of England was induced to select the duchess for the partner of his throne in consequence of the authority which her husband's will and the law gave her over her children; the rich dowry she possessed, and the advantage of securing the alliance of Bretagne against the expected aggressions of France; but the ministers of

* Rymer. † Walsingham.

Charles VI. disappointed the hopes he had formed of obtaining the guardianship of the young princes by conveying them to the French court. The English chronicles are almost entirely silent respecting Henry's queen. The marriage ceremony took place at Winchester, whence she proceeded to London and was crowned with the usual ceremonies.

Henry also procured, very honourable alliances for his two daughters; Blanche the eldest became the wife of the Duke of Bavaria, being conducted to Cologne with great magnificence by the Earl of Somerset, Lord Clifford, the Bishop of Worcester, and others of the nobility. Philippa the youngest espoused Eric son of the King of Denmark; but while these northern princes readily consented to a union with the females of the house of Lancaster, the King of England's hopes of contracting his heir to the daughters of France or Burgundy were baffled, by the mortifying coldness of those powers to his proposals. The Duke of Burgundy indeed after he had lost the ascendance in the government of France, which he had so iniquitously obtained by the murder of his rival, was in his turn urgent for the conclusion of a marriage between the Prince of Wales and one of his daughters, but Henry was then flattered with the prospect of negociating with the ministers of Charles VI., and abandoned his late ally the moment that his own peculiar interest pointed out the advantages of a line of conduct more politic than generous.

The age of Henry IV. presents us with a great number of very curious instances of the darkest superstition. The king himself shared in the general

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credulity, and believed that Owen Glendor could "call spirits from the vasty deep," and that in his campaigns in Wales he combated with no mortal enemy. The Percies when confederating with the Welsh insurgent, it is said, relied with fatal confidence upon a prophecy of the famous enchanter Merlin, which assured them that Henry of Lancaster was the "Moldwarpe cursed of God's own mouth, and that they were the dragon, the lion and the wolf who should divide the realm between them."* Omens and portents are also gravely stated by the old chroniclers as the forerunners of those extraordinary events which placed a younger branch of the Plantagenets upon the throne. The storms and tempests which attended the passage of Richard's first and second queen into England were supposed to have been prophetic of the troubles which ensued. Occurrences more strange and horrible are also recorded of trees weeping blood at the stroke of the axe, of battles in the air between innumerable hosts of insects, of the sun assuming a blood red hue for the space of six weeks, of flaming meteors, and of a fiery dragon visible in several counties. Walsingham has written of "a fatal spectrum or apparition in the summer-time between Bedford and Biggleswade," where sundry monsters of divers colours in the shape of armed men were often seen to issue out of the woods at morning and at noon, "which to such as stood afar off seemed to encounter each other in a most terrible manner;" but when the spectators drew near, the whole pageant vanished. These sights are reported to have been seen previous to the rebellion of

* Hall.

of the Percies, which we are told by Hall followed the appearance of "a houge comete, or blasing starre." The king's illness was ascribed by the monkish historian of the life of Archbishop Scroope to a visible sign of the wrath of heaven for the martyrdom of the holy prelate. Henry during the latter years of his life was subject to erysipelas in the face, which his enemies styled leprosy, and the writer just quoted assures us that notwithstanding the splendid funeral which took place at Canterbury, the body of the king pursued by Divine vengeance was denied the rites of christian burial: "About thirty days after the death of Henry IV.," says Clement Maydstone, "a former domestic of that prince dined at the Trinity-House, Hounslow. During this meal the discourse turning on the character of Henry, the said person said to Thomas Maydstone, an esquire sitting at table, 'God only knows whether or no he was a good man; but this I know, that I was one of three persons who flung his corpse into the Thames, between Berkyng and Gravesend. For,' added he, 'so frightful a rush of winds and waves came pouring in upon us, that eight barges full of noblemen who attended the funeral were utterly dispersed and in the most extreme danger of being lost. Then, we who were entrusted with the royal body being in the most imminent peril of our lives, by common consent threw it into the river; and straightway all was calm. But the coffin in which it had lain, and which was covered with cloth of gold, we carried with great pomp to Canterbury and interred it.' On this account the monks of Canterbury say, 'We have the sepulchre (not the body) of Henry IV. in

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our church.' 'And God is my witness and judge, that I, Clement Maydestone, have heard the said person swear, before my father, Thomas Maydestone, that this account is strictly true."*

The place of the monarch's death is also said to have been prophesied, and Henry relying upon the assurance of "the juggling fiend who keeps the word of promise to the ear but breaks it to the mind," hoped to have expiated all his offences by marching at the head of a new crusade to the holy land. He had been told that he should die at Jerusalem, and he cherished the fallacious expectation of perishing in the sacred cause of religion. Being seized with his last illness while paying his devotions at Saint Edward's shrine in Westminster Abbey, he was conveyed to the abbot's lodgings, and placed in an apartment called the Jerusalem Chamber. The ominous name struck the expiring monarch's ear, and instantly resigning his spirit to its doom, he exclaimed "Lord have mercy upon my soul, for this is the Jerusalem in which a soothsayer told me I should die."†

Henry's declining days are reported upon the authority of Monstrelet to have been embittered by the too eager desire manifested by his eldest son to ascend the throne. The above-named writer avers that the jealous monarch never permitted the crown

* Gough in his Sepulchral Monuments mentions the tale which he classes with "other wonderful stories," introduced by the writer to advance the credit of Archbishop Scroope; but Andrews in noticing Clement Maydestone's narrative suggests the expedience of a visitation of antiquaries to ascertain the truth by an inspection of the monarch's coffin.

† Baker.

which had proved too strong a temptation for his loyalty to be an instant from his sight; he kept a vigilant guard over it during the day and at night it became the companion of his couch. The king's illness was accompanied by long fits of insensibility, and the Prince of Wales, believing that his father's earthly career was closed, seized the golden prize and conveyed it away. Henry recovering from his trance inquired for the object of his solicitude, and being told that the prince had taken possession of this coveted symbol of authority commanded his immediate presence and asked the motive of his conduct.* The prince answered boldly yet respectfully, "Sir, to mine and to all men's judgments you seemed to be dead in this world; wherefore I as your heir apparent took the crown as mine own, and not yours." "Well, fair son," replied the king, sighing deeply, "what right I had to it, and how I enjoyed it God knoweth." "Sir," rejoined the prince, "if you die king, I will have the garland; and I trust to keep it with my sword against all mine enemies as you have done." "Well," said the king, "I commit all to God, and remember you to do well." It is likewise stated that Henry perceiving the indication of a too ambitious spirit in his son Thomas Duke of Clarence, expressed the anxious feelings of a parent for the unanimity of his children, and the intrepid prince, promising to conduct himself as an affectionate brother towards him so long as he should merit his kindness, added, that if he attempted to disturb the realm he could teach him his duty.

* Hall.

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The reign of Henry IV. was disgraced by the execution of the first martyr sacrificed in England by the zeal of the Roman Catholic Church. William Sautré, a parish priest of London, was condemned to be burned for heresy, by Thomas Arundel Archbishop of Canterbury, a staunch supporter of the papal authority, who had unhappily obtained a vast ascendance over the mind of the king; and persecuted with unrelenting severity by this imperious prelate, the reformer underwent the sentence at Smithfield in 1400.*

Reviled and derided by Roman Catholic, and neglected by Protestant writers, history is either hostile or cold when recording the fate of this victim to the tyranny of a barbarous hierarchy. Poetry and painting have also refused to lend their aid in perpetuating the memory of this heroic individual, who, though terrified by the prospect of the fearful death before him, and anxious to escape its lingering torments, yet when commanded to give an unqualified assent to all the absurdities connected with the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, preferred the dreadful alternative and surrendered his body to the flames. The reformer in this choice gave an example of constancy the more worthy of praise, since it had to struggle with the weakness and infirmity of a heart clinging too fondly to the hope of extrication from surrounding perils.

Though Sautré did not rashly challenge the crown of martyrdom, though he hesitated and wavered, and endeavoured to satisfy the scruples of his conscience, and to explain away his doubts (circum-

* Fox.

stances which have weakened the interest of many persons in his fate, and provoked the censure of others), he shrank not from the final test; and this lowly yet sincere Christian affords a glorious example of the triumph of principle over all those sore and pressing temptations which assault the frail and the feeble when called upon to suffer in the cause of truth.

The prominent part which the Archbishop of Canterbury took in the political occurrences of Richard's and of Henry's times entitle him to a distinguished place in the history of those monarch's reigns; but as many of the transactions in which this able statesman bore a considerable share have been already detailed, it will be unnecessary to follow him through all his employments in the settlement of the kingdom and the government of the church. One of the most magnificent prelates, who since the days of Thomas à Becket had ever attained the height of spiritual authority in England, the talents, learning, and energy of Arundel, when directed against the new opinions, stayed the progress of the reformers; and those who persisted in the hopeless struggle for religious rights, paid with their lives the forfeit of their temerity. High spirited, enterprising, plunging boldly into the troubled sea of politics, and persecuting even unto death all who dared to dissent from the canons of the church which he served with so much fiery ardour, munificence is the only christian virtue which Arundel seems to have practised. Contemporary writers have handed down splendid memorials of the liberality of this princely ecclesiastic. We are

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told that he was a benefactor to every see with which he was concerned. The episcopal palace in Holborn belonging to the bishopric of Ely, was almost entirely rebuilt at his own expense. He presented to the church together with other costly gifts a curious and valuable tablet full of the reliques of the saints, set in large pearls, rubies and sapphires, formerly the property of the King of Spain, and afterwards in the possession of the Black Prince, from whom it was purchased by the bishop. He improved the lands of the church at York, and enriched the cathedral with various ornaments and presents of massy plate. To Canterbury he bequeathed many sumptuous habiliments and jewels, with several valuable books, and gave the peal of bells known by the appellation of the "Arundel ring."*

The condemnation of Lord Cobham, at whose trial he presided, was the last act of this distinguished prelate's life. Stricken with a strange and sudden disease in the tongue, a short time after he had pronounced the sentence which delivered the unfortunate nobleman he had so bitterly persecuted to the flames, the Lollards, according to the practice of an age ever prone to believe in the marvellous, did not scruple to aver that his death, which occurred previous to the inhuman execution of the prisoner so lately doomed, was a signal manifestation of the justice of heaven: thus calling before its judgment-seat the accuser with the accused.

Few tournaments of any celebrity took place in the reign of Henry IV. Sir John Cornwall, we are informed by Holinshed, won the king's favour by prevailing over two foreigners who challenged him

* Biographia Brittannica.

to just at York. The monarch was so much delighted with the prowess which he displayed on the occasion, that he gave him permission to marry his sister, the widow of John Holand Earl of Huntingdon; "though," observes the historian, "some said that the knight and the countess were agreed aforehand without the King's consent." Also, afterwards in London the Earl of Kent and the same Sir John Cornwall justed with two Scottish knights and obtained the victory, thus reviving the English glory which had been somewhat tarnished by the discomfiture of Lord Welles in his combat with the Earl of Crawford in the preceding reign.

Henry attempted to check the extravagance of his subjects by reviving the sumptuary laws respecting dress established by his predecessors. He prohibited cloth of gold, of crimson velvet, motley velvet and the fur of the ermine and marten to persons below the dignity of a banneret, with the exception of military officers; and directed that none of inferior rank should wear large hanging sleeves or gowns that touched the ground. The king also endeavoured to restrain the excesses of the clergy in their attire, limiting the permission to wear hoods of costly furs, and the use of gilt trappings, jewels and embroidery to the higher orders of ecclesiastics. Yeomen were commanded to content themselves with the skins of foxes, conies and others; and no person, except his yearly income in lands or tenements amounted to twenty pounds, or who possessed goods and chattels to the amount of two hundred, was allowed to use "baselards, girdles, daggers or horns (drinking or hunting horns) decorated with silver,"*

* Statutes 8 Henry IV.

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nor any other trappings formed of the same precious metal. The king's ordinances bore hard upon the ladies: rich furs were denied to the wives of esquires who were not ennobled, and those only who were married to the Mayor of London, of Warwick and other free towns, or who were in attendance upon the queen or some great lady of the court, were excepted from a law which condemned simple gentlewomen to relinquish the toys and gauds so universally the objects of feminine desire. The outcry of popular writers and the continual recurrence of similar ordinances shew how ill the mandates of the sovereign were obeyed when they militated against the growth of luxury. A curious statute passed in this reign affords a proof of the fantastic taste which prevailed: the king declared that no man however exalted in rank should be permitted to wear a gown or garment cut or slashed into pieces in the form of letters, rose leaves and posies of various kinds, or any such-like devices, under the penalty of forfeiting the same; and any tailor presuming to make such a gown or garment in defiance of the royal authority was liable to fine and imprisonment, the duration of the latter punishment to be at the pleasure of the king.

To the ouches, beads of gold and other devices in jewellery which were considered to be the necessary appendages of rank and wealth, was added under Henry IV. the collar of S. S. This splendid ornament, we are told by Camden, received its appellation from the initial letter of the name of an eminent Roman lawyer, Sanctus Simo Simplicius; but a more satisfactory origin is afforded by the

suggestion of a distinguished antiquary of our own time, Dr. Meyrick, who is of opinion that it was derived from the initial of Henry's motto, which while he was Earl of Derby was "*Souveraine*," and which as he afterwards became sovereign appeared auspicious. The attachment of Henry to this motto of fortunate augury is evident from its continual repetition upon the monarch's tomb; a circumstance also noticed by Dr. Meyrick as strongly in favour of his supposition.

Mail armour, which had been in use in England from the period of the Norman invasion, and which though not universally adopted in latter years maintained its ground until the middle of the fifteenth century, was now rapidly declining in favour.* Henry IV. is the last of our kings who appears in it on his great seal; it consisted of the following particulars:—"a loose garment stuffed with cotton or wool called a gambeson, over which was worn a coat of mail formed of double rings or mascles of iron interwoven like the meshes of a net, called a hawberk. To it were fixed a hood, sleeves and hose, also of mail. The head was defended with a helmet, and by a leather thong round the neck hung a shield. The heels of a knight were equipped with spurs having rowels near three inches in length. Over all these, men of considerable family wore rich surcoats, like those of heralds, charged with their armorial bearings."† Plate armour, a more splendid and in those times a more fashionable equipment for the field, "was composed of different pieces for the back, breast, shoulders, arms, hands, thighs, and

* Gough. † Grose.

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feet, under the several names of *cuirass*, consisting of a back and breast-piece, *pouldrons brassart*, or *gondebras*, or *avant-bras*, corruptly in English *vambraces*, *gauntlets*, *cuissarts*, with *grenouillieris*, *greaves* and iron shoes."*

The crackows or piked shoes of Richard II. were rivalled in absurdity by the sleeves which came into fashion in the beginning of his successor's reign, when the dress we are told was extravagant, especially the gowns with deep and wide sleeves, commonly called Pokys, shaped like bagpipes, and worn indifferently both by servants and masters. "They may," says our author,† "rightly be called the devil's receptacles; for whatever could be stolen was popt into them; some of them were so large and wide that they reached down to the feet or at least to the knees, full of slits and devils. When the servants were bringing up pottage, sauces, or any other liquor, their sleeves went into the dishes and had the first taste; and all that was given to them or that they could get, was spent to clothe their uncurable carcases with these pokys or sleeves, while the rest of the habit was cut short." Occleve the poet satarizes these mantles with long sleeves in the following lines:—

"Now hath this land little need of broomes,
To sweep away the filth out of the street;
Sin side sleeves of pennilesse grooms
Will it uplicke, be it dry or weete."

Henry V. when Prince of Wales, and in disgrace with his father, jealous of the numbers who forsaking the palace of the sovereign flocked to the

* Gough. † Camden.

heir apparent's court, visited the king fantastically attired in a gown of blue satin full of small oylet holes worked in black, with a needle hanging at every hole by a silken thread; about his arm he wore a hound's collar studded with S S of gold, the tirets being of the same metal. But after the accession of this wild prince to the throne, his character appears to have undergone a total change, the sportive whims of his early youth gave place to stern imperturbability, and though occasionally a redeeming trait of generosity shone forth with dazzling radiance, illumining the barbarous deeds of a cruel conqueror, the remorseless manner in which he pursued his own ambitious schemes impresses the mind with an unfavourable opinion of the qualities of his heart. It is told in Henry's honour that upon his return from the glorious field of Azincourt, he checked the eager enthusiasm of his subjects by silencing the psalms and hymns which were sung in the streets to his praise as he passed along; nor would he permit his dinted helmet and bruised armour to be displayed as the trophies of his valour, an affectation of humility unbecoming at the moment in which the people were burning with affectionate ardour for their heroic monarch, and longed to pour out the feelings of their souls in songs and shouts of joy. CHAP. IX.

Few monarchs have obtained a higher character for piety than Henry V., his devout observance of all the formalities of religious worship prescribed by the priesthood, his prayers, pilgrimages and penances, and his zeal for the glory of God, are lauded and praised by all his biographers; but although Henry

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might have been very sincere in his professions of faith, yet he contented himself with its outward forms and externals, and suffered the scrupulous adherence to the rites of the church which has been so much applauded to interfere very little with the concerns of this world. Indeed, the adoption of certain opinions, and the performance of certain ceremonies was all that the ministers of religion required from the laity, and they were more anxious to teach the necessity of conforming to the rites with which they had encumbered the simplicity of the apostolic worship, than to explain and to enforce the pure and benevolent precepts of christianity. Henry in his father's life-time, and before his heart became steeled against the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, moved to compassion by the shrieks of a wretch at the stake,* ordered the flames to be quenched, and uniting his entreaties to the exhortations of the Prior of St. Bartholomew, that the condemned heretic would abjure his errors, offered him life and an adequate provision for his future comfort if he would acknowledge the miraculous power imputed to the priesthood in the sacrament of the Lord's body. The unhappy man, though shrinking from the faggot and the brand, when the consecrated wafer was placed before him, declared that he could only believe it to be "hallowed bread," and Henry, shocked at the contumacy evinced by his expected proselyte, left him to his fate. The rigid severity of the pious monarch's principles is

* Chronicle of London, for which, and for the anecdote below relative to Olandyne, the author is indebted to Nicholas Harris Nicolas, Esq. F.S.A. who kindly pointed them out to her notice.

also displayed by the following narrative. "Amongst his (Henry's) host upon the sea beach at Southampton, he found a certain gentleman whose name was Olandyne, in whose company were twenty men well apparelled for the war. This Olandyne had given to poor people for Christ's sake all his substance and goods, and in great devotion entered a monk of the monastery of the Charter House, whose wife was also a professed nun in a house of religious women, and there continued during her life. But this Olandyne, at the instigation of the devil, enemy to all virtue, after a little time repented his profession, and obtained from the Pope a dispensation from his vows and to resume his former temporal estate; and as a temporal man offered to do the king service in the war. But when the most virtuous king was informed of his life and conversation as the child of God, he refused the company of this gentleman as an inconstant man, and a contemner of the religion of Christ; at whose refusal this Olandyne having indignation as a man replete with pride, departed from the king and went unto the aid of his adversaries in France, whereafter he was slain in the field of Azincourt, right for fighting against ye Englishmen."

The savage insensibility with which Henry beheld the agonizing sufferings of many thousand persons thrust out of the city of Rouen, which he had determined to reduce by famine is revolting to every sentiment of humanity; although plenty reigned in his camp he permitted these miserable creatures to perish by a tormenting and lingering death, refusing

† Harleian Manuscripts.

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either to administer to their urgent necessities or to allow them safe egress to the open country through his lines, in order to force the more compassionate inhabitants of the besieged city to receive the forlorn outcasts again within the walls, and by thus augmenting the distress to oblige the authorities of Rouen to surrender at his mercy.

In a poem written by an eye-witness of the siege we learn, that upon Christmas-day Henry's piety induced him to supply the whole of the famishing multitude with abundant refreshments of meat and drink. The diligent antiquary to whom the reading world are indebted for this relique of the poetry of Henry's reign, makes the following just remark upon the king's solitary act of charity.* "It is pleasing to see the horrors of warfare softened in ever so small a measure by religious feeling, but one cannot help reflecting that a fuller operation of that feeling would have induced Henry to extend his compassion to somewhat beyond a mere ostentatious exercise of benevolence which could only serve to prolong the misery of its objects." This acute writer suggests a reason for Henry's cruel resolution not to allow the starving suppliants a passage through his camp, more creditable to his humanity than that which the historians of the siege of Rouen have assigned. The poet states the cause to have been "lest they should see our watch." "The true one perhaps," observes our author, "was, lest they should convey any communications from the garrison to the French monarch."†

Henry also committed an act of unjustifiable severity towards the Scottish auxiliaries in the service

* Conybeare. † Archæologia, Vol. 21.

of France; he had compelled the young King of Scotland who had been detained in close confinement from the period of his unfortunate voyage, to accompany him on his foreign campaigns; and during the siege of Melun he sent in his prisoner's name to the Scottish soldiers who composed a part of the garrison, and commanded them on their allegiance to abandon the cause which they had espoused and range themselves under the standard of their king: but the Scots refused compliance, declaring that they would not obey a monarch who could only act according to the will of his captor; and Henry when the town capitulated gratified his own revenge while pretending to punish an affront offered to his illustrious prisoner, and executed twenty of these brave soldiers. He also beheaded a gentleman belonging to his household named Bertrand de Chaumont, who had espoused his cause at Azincourt, because he owed fealty to the King of England by holding lands in Guienne so long under the dominion of that crown. This loyal soldier suffered for the crime of aiding the escape of a person suspected of a participation in the murder of the Duke of Burgundy,* who fled from Melun, aware that in the event of a capitulation mercy would not be extended to him. When the connivance of his servant in this affair was reported to the king he was, we are informed by Monstrelet, "troubled thereat, Chaumont being much beloved by him for his valour;" but although he declared that he would rather have given five hundred thousand nobles than that this cherished favourite should have com-

* Monstrelet.

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mitted so disloyal an act, he remained inexorable to the entreaties both of the Duke of Clarence and of the Duke of Burgundy, who generously interceded for the culprit, and doomed him to the block, sternly rejecting their solicitation in his behalf by the reply that he would have no traitors in his army.

At Montereau the king likewise displayed the rigid implacability of temper which too often disgraced his victories, the castle held out after the capitulation of the town. Henry threatening to hang the prisoners taken at the latter place unless the fortress he was so anxious to reduce should surrender, sent them with a strong escort under the walls to hold a parley with the garrison. These unfortunate persons with many tears and lamentations implored their fellow countrymen to yield, urging them the more earnestly on the plea of the impossibility of defending the towers against the powerful force which the English and the Burgundians had brought to the siege. The governor believing it to be his duty to maintain the castle to the last extremity, replied that he could not surrender consistently with honour, and left the supplicants to the mercy of the King of England. The prisoners relinquishing all hope prayed to be allowed to speak to their wives or other relations who had fled to the castle, and taking an affecting leave of these beloved friends returned to the quarters of the besieging army, and Henry ordering a scaffold to be erected before the walls, hung these devoted men in sight of the garrison. The fortress submitted eight days afterwards.*

* Monstrelet,

The historian gladly turns from these and similar scenes of cruelty and oppression produced by an insatiable thirst for conquest to more amusing anecdotes.

Amid the noble prisoners who were taken at the battle of Azincourt was the Count de Richemont, a son of the dowager Queen of England; the captive was conducted to his mother's presence, who stood behind the circle, and the young prince mistaking one of the ladies for a parent from whom he had been long separated saluted the stranger: the lady after some conversation desired him to pay his compliments to her companions, and passing from one to the other he came at last to the queen, who no longer able to dissemble, burst forth into a passionate exclamation, "Ah! are you so forgetful a son as not to know your mother!" A scene of the tenderest nature ensued, tears and embraces were followed by mutual expressions of delight. Upon his departure the queen presented her son with a thousand nobles, which he divided between his fellow prisoners and his guards.*

All the old chronicles mention a disturbance of a very disgraceful nature which took place in 1417, during a sermon in St. Dunstan's in the east. A quarrel commenced between Lord Strange and Sir John Trussel, "at the instigation," says Hollingshead, "of their wives, gentlewomen at cursed hatred with one another. Two wise gentlemen I visse and well advised," adds the sarcastic historian. Some of the spectators interfering, Thomas Petwarden, a citizen and fishmonger, was we are told

* History D'Artur III. Duc de Bretagne.

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by Fabian "slain out of hand." Both combatants were at length secured and conveyed to the "countear in the Poultry." The service of the church was suspended on account of the sacrilegious violence which had been committed within the holy precincts, and Lord Strange being proved the offending person, "he was therefore denounced accursed at Poulescrosse, and in all parysshe churches of London; and finally he was demyd (doomed) to penance and dyd it, and made great amendes to the wife of the said Thomas, for the deth of her husband." We find in Stow the nature of the punishment to which the aggressors in this murderous brawl were subjected: "Lord Strange and his wife, on the first of May following, in Paul's church, before the archbishop, the recorder of London, and others, submitted themselves to penance which was enjoined them, that immediately all their servants should, in their shirts, goe before the parson of St. Dunstan's church, and the lord bare-headed, with his ladie bare-footed, Reginald Henwood, arch-deacon of London following them, and at the hallowing of the church, the ladie should fill all the vessels with water, and also offer an ornament of tenne pound, and the Lord Strange should offer a purse of five pound."

During the reign of Henry V. England was honoured by a visit from the Emperor Sigismund, a monarch who vainly exerted his influence to appease the deadly strife between France and England. On his arrival at Dover, the Duke of Gloucester, constable of the castle, attended by many English noblemen who were assembled on the shore, stepped

into the water followed by his companions with their swords drawn, at the moment in which the emperor was prepared to land, and arresting his progress, said "That if he came as a mediator of peace they would receive him with all the honours due to the imperial dignity; but if as emperor he pretended to challenge a sovereign power and designed to claim and exercise any such authority, they must declare to him, that as the nation was a free people and their king had no dependence on any monarch upon earth, so they were resolved in defence of the liberties of the one and of the rights of the other, to oppose his coming on the English shores."*

This spirited address was occasioned by the conduct of the emperor at Paris, where at an assembly of the parliament which he had been invited to attend, he had taken the chair appropriated to the Kings of France, and in thus placing himself in the regal seat had also usurped the royal authority by interposing in a cause which was pleaded before the senate. Two gentlemen aspired to the seneschalship of Beauquaire, and both claimed it by virtue of the king's gift, but one urged against the other that he was incapable of enjoying the post because he was not a chevalier. The emperor silenced this objection by inquiring of the defendant whether he were willing to receive the honour of knighthood, and being answered in the affirmative called for a sword and performed the ceremony. The interest taken in this affair by their imperial guest in all probability biassed the opinion of the judges, their award being in favour of the newly created knight. The cir-

* Goodwin.

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cumstance naturally provoked many observations; and it is said that the King of France though he dissembled his resentment to the author of the indignity, severely reprehended the parliament for permitting the affront.

The emperor assured the Duke of Gloucester and his gallant associates that the sole motive of his visit was to establish a peace between England and France; he was then received and conducted to London with fitting honours, presented with the order of the Garter, and at the grand banquet given upon the investiture, Henry courteously relinquished the throne of state to his illustrious guest.

Though Sigismund failed in the chief object of his mission, the most perfect unanimity prevailed between the two sovereigns. Both were bent upon the extirpation of heresy, and a reciprocity of sentiment upon a subject so intimately connected with the interests of the Roman Catholic Church, united them in the bonds of friendship with each other, preserved a tottering edifice which the efforts of the reformers in Germany and England threatened to overthrow, and quelled the spirit of opposition by the brand and by the axe.

We are informed by Speed that on the departure of the emperor, "he gave to Sir John Tiptoft and other knights, who formed his guard of honour, a thousand crowns in gold, and to their king he sent a *unicorne's* horn about six feet long, with many other choice and precious gifts, as pledges of his love and thankfulness."

Henry, though so greatly impoverished by his foreign wars as to be obliged to pawn his plate, emu-

lated the magnificence of his predecessors, the sails of the ship which conveyed him on his second expedition to France were of purple silk richly embroidered with gold, a prodigality of extravagance borrowed from the French, who when preparing to invade England in the reign of Richard II. decorated their gallies in the most costly manner, the masts being painted from top to bottom at an immense expence, "and some," says Froissart, "by way of greater pomp were even covered with sheets of fine gold." Henry appeared at the battle of Azincourt mounted on a spirited charger with a bridle and furniture of goldsmith's work and the caparisons richly embroidered with the splendid ensigns of the English monarchy: he was followed by a train of led horses ornamented with the most gorgeous trappings. The king's helmet was of polished steel surmounted with a coronet of gold set with precious gems, and his surcoat was emblazoned with the arms of France and England; namely, the fleur de lys, or and gules, three lions passant gardant, or. The nobles who attended were equipped in a style of similar splendour, their horses being also decorated with their proper armorial bearings. Henry's gallant brother the Duke of Clarence rushed to the disastrous battle in which he lost his life sumptuously arrayed and distinguished by the richness of his arms and a coronet of gold sparkling with jewels on his helm. The dazzling brilliance of these ornaments rendered the duke conspicuous to the foe; and the Scottish troops in the service of France anxious to wipe out the stain cast upon them by their allies, that "they were better at eating and

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drinking than at fighting,"* furiously attacked the English commander who having sustained a severe wound from John Swintoun, a Scots cavalier whom he bravely repelled, was struck from his horse by the truncheon of the Earl of Buchan.

The splendid emblazoned surcoats which spread their cumbrous but not ungraceful drapery over the steel clad limbs of a knight, were it is said first adopted by the Crusaders, and served both to distinguish the various nations who flocked to the banners of the Cross, and to throw a veil over the iron armour, which acquired an intolerable degree of heat when exposed to the vertical rays of the sun. It was partly owing we are told† to the richness of the robe which enveloped his coat of mail that Sir John Chandos, a celebrated commander in the wars of Edward III., lost his life at Pont de Lussac; this magnificent mantle reached to the ground, blazoned with his arms on white sarsenet, argent, or pile gules, one on his breast, and the other on his back; its immense length encumbered him in walking, and getting his legs entangled in the folds before he could recover himself he received a death wound from an esquire, a "strong expert man named James de Martin."

No bard of eminence sprang up in the reign of Henry IV.; the strains of Occleve, miserably inferior to those of the glorious poets who preceded him, are chiefly meritorious for their adoption of the polished style of those great masters, who so sedulously endeavoured to improve and to refine their native language. Destitute of vigour and of fancy

* Goodwin. † Froissart.

Occleve is most successful when lashing the follies of the times; and the information contained in his poems relative to those changes in fashions and customs, which he so pathetically laments, render some of his compositions exceedingly curious and valuable. In one of these satirical effusions the poet complains "That it is a great evil to see a man walking in a gown of twelve yards wide, with sleeves reaching to the ground, and lined with fur, worth twenty pounds or more; when at the same time if he had only been master of what he paid for, he would not have had enough to line a hood. Certainly," continues the censor, "the great lords are to blame, if I dare say as much, to permit their dependants to imitate their dress: in former times persons of rank were known by their apparel, but at present it is very difficult to distinguish the nobleman from one of low degree." Occleve next proceeds to reprobate the "foule waste of cloth" attendant upon the lavish and luxurious amplitude of the fashionable garments, assuring us that no less than a yard of cloth was expended for one man's tippet, and predicting that the tailors would soon be compelled to shape their habiliments in the open fields for want of room to cut them out in their own houses, "that man only being respected who bears upon his back at one time the greatest quantity of cloth and of fur." Speaking of John of Ghent, our poet says that his garments were not too wide and yet they became him wondrously well; and in commenting upon the folly and vanity of the age takes occasion to show that the vast sums of money expended upon dress was attended by a proportionate retrenchment of the good cheer which formerly

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made the tables groan with the weight of the feast, and that the decay of hospitality was the consequence of the universal passion for costly attire.

Lydgate, of whose superior endowments honourable mention will be made hereafter, first tuned his harmonious lyre in the reign of Henry V.; his description of the victorious monarch's entrance and reception into London is probably one of the earliest efforts of his muse, and although not equal to many of his subsequent compositions cannot fail to interest the reader.

PASSUS TERCIUS.

And there he restyd ferrament,
At his owne will whilys that it was,
And shipped thanne in good entent,
And at Dovorr landyd y ges;
To Canterbury full fair he past,
And offered at Seynt Thomas shryne;
Fro thens sone he rod in hast,
To Etham he cam in good tyme.
Wot ye right well, &c.

The Mayr of London was redy bown,
With alle the craftes of that cite,
Alle clothyd in red thorugh out the town,
A semely sight it was to se:
To the Blak heth thanne rod he,
And spredde the way on every syde.;
XX^{ti} M^{l} men myght well se,
Our comely kyng for to abyde.
Wot ye right well, &c.

The kyng from Eltham sone he cam
Hyse presenors with hym dede brynge,
And to the Blak heth ful sone he cam,
He saw London withoughte lesynge;

Heil ryall London, seyde oure kyng,
Crist the kepe evere from care;
And thanne gaf it his blessyng,
And praied to Crist that it well fare.

The Mair hym mette with moche honour,
With all the aldermen without lesyng;
Heil, seyde the mair, the conquerour,
The grace of God with thee doth spryng;
Heil duk, heil prynce, heil comely kyng,
Most worthiest Lord undir Crist ryall,
Heil rulere of Remes withoute lettyng,
Heil flour of knyghts now over all.

Here is come youre citee all,
Yow to worchepe and to magnyfye,
To welcome yow, bothe gret and small,
With yow everemore to lyve and dye.
Grauntmercy Sires, oure kyng gan say;
And toward London he gan ride;
This was upon seynt Clementys day,
They welcomed hym on every syde.

The lordes of Fraunce, thei gan say then,
Ingelond is nought as we wen,
It farith be these Englisshmen,
As it doth be a swarm of ben;
Ingland is like an hive withinne,
There fleeres makith us full evell to wryng,
Tho ben there arrowes sharpe and kene,
Thorugh oure harneys they do us styng.

To London brigge, thanne rood our kyng,
The processions there they mette hym ryght,
"Ave Rex Anglorum" their gan syng
"Flos mundi" thei seyde, Goddys knyght,
To London brigge whan he com ryght,
Upon the gate ther stode on hy,
A gyaunt that was full grym of syght,
To teche the Frensshmen curtesye.

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And at the drawe brigge, that is faste by,
To toures there were upright;
An antelope and a lyon stondyng hym by,
Above them seynt George oure lady knyght,
Besyde hym many an angell bright,
" Benedictus " thei gan synge,
" Qui venit in nomine domini " goddes knyght,
" Gracia Dei " with yow doth sprynge.

Into London thanne rood oure kyng,
Full goodly there thei gonnen hym grete;
Thorugh out the town thanne gonne they syng,
For joy and merthe y yow behete;
Men and women for joye they alle,
Of his comyng thei weren so fayn,
That the Condyd bothe grete and smalle,
Ran wyn ich on as y herde sayn.

The tour of Cornhill that is so shene,
I may well say now as y knowe,
It was full of Patriarkes alle be dene,
" Cantate " thei songe upon a rowe;
There bryddes thei gon down throwe,
An hundred there flew aboughte our kyng,
" Laus ejus " bothe hyghe and lowe
" In ecclesia sanctorum " thei dyd syng.

Unto the Chepe thanne rood oure kyng,
To the Condyt whanne he com tho,
The xij apostelys thei gon syng,
" Benedic anima domino "
XII kynges there were on a rowe,
They knelyd doun be on asent,
And obles aboughte oure kyng gan throwe,
And wolcomyd hym with good entent.

The cros in Chepe verrament.
It was gret joy it for to beholde,
It was araied full reverent,
With a castell right as God wolde,

With baners brighte beten with gold,
And Angelys senssyd hym that tyde,
With besaunts riche many a fold,
They strowed oure kyng on every syde.

Virgynes out of the castell gon glyde,
For joye of hym they were daunsyng;
They knelyd a doun alle in that tyde,
"Nowell" "Nowell" alle thei gon syng.
Unto Poules thanne rood oure kyng,
XIIII bysshopes hym mette there right
The grete bellys thanne did they ryng,
Upon his feet full faire he light.

And to the heighe auter he went right,
"Te deum!" for joye thanne thei gon syng;
And there he offred to God almyght,
And thanne to Westminster he wente withoute dwellyng.
In xv wokes forsothe, he wroughte al this,
Conquered Harfleu and Agincourt;
Crist brynge there soules all to blys,
That in that day were mort.

Crist that is oure hevene kyng,
His body and soule save and se;
Now all Ingelond may say and syng,
"Blyssyd mote be the Trinite,"
This jornay have ye herd now alle be dene,
The date of Crist I wot is was,
A thousand foure hundred and fyftene.
Gloria tibi Trinitas.

Harflu fert Mauric; Augincourt prelia Crispin.

Henry was deeply attached to literature and to music; he delighted in songs and musical instruments, "insomuch," says Baker, "that in his chappell, amongst his private prayers he used certain psalms of David, translated into English metre, by John Lydgate, a monk of Bury." We are also told

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that he was himself a performer on the organ; and his love of books is evinced by the petition of the Countess of Westmorland, who, after his decease prayed that the Chronicles of Jerusalem, and the Expedition of Godfrey of Bouillon,* which the late king had borrowed of her, might be restored. From the same authority we learn, that the Prior of Christchurch in the city of Canterbury had also lent the works of St. Gregory to the king. The good monk complains of the Prior of Shene for detaining the book. Henry, amid his other accomplishments, was distinguished for bodily activity. A contemporary (Titus Livius) quoted by Baker, writes, that he was so swift of foot, "that he, with two of his lords, without bow or other engine, would take a wild buck or a doe in a large park."

The marriage of Henry with a princess of France, his nomination to the succession by Charles VI., and the deadly hatred which a large portion of the nation bore to the partizans of the dauphin, reconciled the conquered provinces to foreign rule: and, in acknowledging the king of England as their future sovereign they, in common with his more ancient subjects, took a generous pride in the glorious deeds which filled all Europe with admiration and surprise. At this gallant monarch's death Walsingham assures us that the people of Paris and Rouen offered immense sums to have the corpse of the hero interred amongst them.

The obsequies of a king who was followed to the grave by the affectionate regrets of two powerful nations, were conducted with splendour worthy

* Rymer.

of the occasion. The body lay in state in the church of Notre Dame in Paris, where the funeral service was performed, and then it was conveyed with fitting pomp and solemnity to Rouen, at which place magnificent preparations were made for the procession to England. The corpse, enclosed in a leaden coffin, was put into a chariot drawn by six horses, and on a bed in the same chariot reposed an effigy of the king royally attired, having a crown on his head, a sceptre in his right hand, and a ball in his left, all of gold; the coverture of the bed was of vermilion silk embroidered with gold, and the chariot was surmounted by a canopy of silk.* The trappings of the horses were exceedingly rich. The first bore the arms of St. George, the second those of Normandy, the third of King Arthur, the fourth of St. Edward, the fifth of France, and the sixth those of France and England. King James of Scotland followed as chief mourner, attended by the Duke of Exeter, the Earls of Warwick, March, Stafford and Mortaigne; the Lords Fitzhugh, Hungerford, Sir Robert Robessart, Lord Bourchier, Sir John Cornwel, Lord Fanhope, and the Lord Cromwell. The banners of the Saints were borne by the Lords Lovel, Audely, Morley, and Zouch. The Baron of Dudley bore the standard, and the Earl of Longueville the banner. The achievements were carried by twelve captains, and around the chariot rode five hundred men at arms all in black armour, their horses barbed black and their lances held with the points downwards. A great multitude attired in white bearing lighted

* Monstrelet and Holingshed.

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torches also encompassed the chariot. The members of the royal household, clothed in black went next; and after them, the royal family in deep mourning. The queen with a splendid retinue followed at a league distance. In whatsoever church the royal body reposed upon its journey to England, masses were said without interruption from the first dawn of the morning until nine. Upon landing at Dover, the funeral procession moved with the same pomp to London. On approaching the capital it was met by fifteen bishops in their pontifical habits, and a numerous train of abbots, in their mitres and vestments, together with an immense assembly of priests, citizens, and people. The ecclesiastics who attended the dead body of the king into London, performed all the way and through the streets of the city, the funeral devotions. The princes of the royal family in mournful attitudes following next the chariot until it reached Westminster Abbey, where the corpse, deposited in a magnificent tomb, received the last honours from the weeping multitude, who with unaffected sorrow consigned the perishing remains of the conqueror of France to an early grave.

CHAPTER X.

Appointments of the King's Uncles—Coronation of the Dauphin—Success of the Duke of Bedford—Sparing Grants to the Duke of Bedford—The Infant King exhibited to his Subjects—Conduct of the Council towards the Earl of March—Death of the Earl—disabilities of his Heir—Grant of the Council—Restoration of Richard Duke of York—his large Possessions—Imprudent Conduct of Gloucester—Marriage with Jacqualine of Hainault—Appeal of the Duke of Brabant—Gloucester invades the Territory belonging to his Wife—Burgundy hastens to his Kinsman's assistance—Quarrel between Gloucester and Burgundy—The Pope's Bull—Effects of Gloucester's rash Ambition—Opposition of Beaufort Bishop of Winchester—Gloucester's second Marriage—Continued Disputes in the Council—Punishment of the Citizens—Violent Conduct of the opposing Parties—Mediation of the Archbishop—Beaufort's Letter—Arrival of the Duke of Bedford—Meeting of Parliament—Charges against Beaufort—Reconciliation between Gloucester and Beaufort—Elevation of the latter—The King's Education—Appointment of the Earl of Warwick—Contrast of Character between Henry and his Tutor—Errors of Gloucester's political Career—Successful Hostility of his Enemies.

CHAP. X.

1422.

Upon the decease of Henry V. John of Lancaster Duke of Bedford was appointed regent, and the English Parliament invested Humphrey Duke of Gloucester with the honourable office of Protector in England during the absence of his elder brother. A competitor to the sceptre of France existed in

CHAP. X. the person of the Dauphin who was crowned at Poictiers by the faithful few who still adhered to his ruined fortunes,* but the possession by the English of a large territory, including Paris, part of Maine and Anjou, nearly the whole of Picardy and Normandy, together with Guienne and Gascony, their closely cemented friendship with the Duke of Burgundy, and their alliance with Bretagne gave them so formidable an ascendance that there appeared little chance of the recovery of his inheritance by an inexperienced and dissipated youth of nineteen.

Victory still attended the banners of the Duke of Bedford, and under disadvantages which had scarcely been felt by Henry V.; the somewhat sparing grants transmitted from England, he continued a campaign which promised to end in the indissoluble union of the two kingdoms.† The English people though dazzled by the splendour of so glorious an acquisition, were not neglectful of their own interests; they watched the conduct of the Duke of Gloucester at home with active jealousy, and a vigorous administration introduced many wise regulations for the execution of justice, and circumscribed the protector's power within its proper limits. The slender supplies of men and money which were voted by Parliament for carrying on the war in France taught the regent a lesson of economy which that prudent prince did not fail to observe.‡ Their baby sovereign displayed to the populace in all the interesting weakness of infancy, lying on the lap of his young and beautiful mother, and bearing on his

* Monstrelet.

† Parliament Rolls. ‡ Parliament Rolls.

delicate features a resemblance to the valiant mo- CHAP. X.
narch whose splendid talents they fondly imagined would descend with his crown to the fair child who now claimed their homage, inspired the English with the deepest sentiments of affection and loyalty to the innocent representative of their idol.

Surrounded by kinsmen distinguished for their genius and virtue, and devoted with undeviating attachment to his service, Henry VI. succeeded to the throne apparently guarded against all the evils usually attending a minority. The council acquitted themselves with infinite wisdom and address in the disposal of the Earl of March, they observed that notwithstanding his patient acquiescence in the succession of the infant monarch, that he affected a superiority over other noblemen by the surpassing numbers and magnificence of his retinue, thus maintaining the grandeur of his descent and attracting the eyes of the multitude by the splendour of his appearance. Characterized by the same generous spirit which had marked the conduct of the late sovereign to the heir of so many dangerous pretensions, they appointed him to the command in Ireland, a post of great dignity and trust, which, whilst it conferred honour upon the possessor removed him from the regards of the people and the temptation which their admiration, combined with his own secret feelings, might have produced; and his death which happened shortly afterwards seemed to secure the permanent establishment of the Lancastrian family upon the throne. The hereditary claims of the Earl of March descended to the son of his sister Anne married to the Earl of Cambridge, who was beheaded

CHAP. X. in 1415, a young man incapacitated by the attainder of his father and the consequent forfeiture of the family titles and estates from disturbing the government, had he been permitted to remain in the obscurity in which he had been plunged by these events. In considering the cautious though liberal policy observed towards Edmund Mortimer, it is difficult to account for the oversight which the guardians of Henry VI. committed in raising up a rival infinitely more powerful from the rank and possessions of his paternal uncle, than the Earl of March had been. A series of fortuitous circumstances in the death of that prince without issue, and the ruin of the House of York in the person of the Earl of Cambridge, had reduced the only individual who could dispute the title of the reigning monarch to a private station, and it was indeed, as Camden observes, an instance of "great but unwary liberality," which enabled the depressed heir of a convicted traitor to act so conspicuous a part in the political arena in after years. The youth of Henry VI. and the small degree of power which he enjoyed, must exonerate him from the imprudence of this measure: and though he might have felt a generous anxiety for the restoration of his kinsman to the family honours, so dangerous a gift could not have been conferred without the full consent of his council. Richard, son of the Earl of Cambridge, in the sixteenth year after his father's death, was formally invested with the titles and estates forfeited in the reign of Henry V. as son of Richard, the brother of Edmund Duke of York, and cousin german to Edmund Earl of March, and now, adds our author, "being Duke

of York, Earl of March and Ulster, Lord of Wigmore, Clare, Trim and Connaught, waxed strong and mighty." It was not however until a considerable period had elapsed, and many circumstances had combined to weaken the present government, that the House of York attained a dangerous pre-eminence in the state: events with which Richard Plantagenet, the present heir, had nothing to do, and circumstances over which he possessed not the slightest controul, prepared the way for the momentous struggle between him and his successors with the Lancastrian family. CHAP. X.

The Protector, though endeared to the English nation, and honoured by all posterity for his domestic virtues, for the kindness of his disposition, his taste and feeling, and the liberal and munificent spirit which he displayed upon all occasions, was yet rash and passionate, ambitious and self-willed; and suffering himself to be swayed by personal considerations rather than by the welfare of his country, he by an impolitic, unadvised and hasty marriage, gave the first check to the English arms in France. Jacqueline of Hainault, heiress of rich possessions, comprising Holland, Zealand, Friesland and Hainault, had taken the Duke of Brabant, who was cousin german to the Duke of Burgundy, for her second husband, having been previously betrothed to the elder brother of the French king.* Destined to be unfortunate in marriage, she conceived so strong a disgust to this prince that she fled away from him and took refuge in the English court. The Duke of Gloucester, unhappily smitten by her beauty and

* Monstrelet.

CHAP. X. dazzled by her splendid inheritance obtained through the division which agitated the Papal court, a divorce between her and the Duke of Brabant from
1422. the Anti-pope, and took her for his wife. Instantly laying claim to her dominions, which her husband refused to yield, both parties resorted to arms, supported by the feudal barons of the soil, who espoused the cause of their respective princes. The Duke of Brabant appealed to his friends and allies, and an unsuccessful negotiation was entered into between the Dukes of Bedford and Burgundy to reconcile the jarring interests of their enraged kinsmen. Their award being unfavourable to the Duke of Gloucester he marched five thousand men whom he had previously landed at Calais into Hainault; and the Duke of Burgundy to repel this invasion led away those forces which were originally intended to be employed against the King of France.

The same impetuous spirit which had blinded the Duke of Gloucester to the consequences of irritating the ally of England, now precipitated him into a personal quarrel with this potent prince. He addressed an angry letter to the Duke of Burgundy which was answered by a defiance to a single combat, and the acceptance of the challenge put an end to the war, all hostilities being stayed until the event of the duel (which never took place) should be known. Things in the mean time assumed a formidable aspect: the English commanders enthusiastic in the cause of a native prince, were ready to sacrifice the public weal for the paltry interests of a private individual, and were hardly to be restrained from abandoning their duty in order to support his

doubtful claims; and the Duke of Bedford would have vainly endeavoured to maintain his authority had not a bull from the legitimate pope arrived which set the matter at rest by declaring Jacqueline's third marriage to be null and void. CHAP. X.

Whilst Gloucester's intemperate pursuit of personal aggrandizement threatened to involve the allies in disputes ruinous to the English in their foreign affairs, the same ungovernable disposition led to consequences destructive of the national welfare at home. Continually opposed by his uncle Beaufort Bishop of Winchester, illegitimate brother of Henry IV., his rash imprudence gave this ambitious and intriguing prelate a manifest advantage over him. The dignified situation which the protector occupied called for the utmost wisdom and circumspection in the preservation of the authority delegated to him, and of unanimity between the associates, of his administration; but injudiciously attempting to bear down all opposition he introduced division in the councils, weakened his own power, and by trying the strength of his adversaries produced those factions which so fatally agitated the devoted kingdom.* Regardless of the opinion of the world, when he could no longer hope to secure the inheritance of the lady whom he had so hastily married, he gratified a disgraceful passion by raising a mistress whose character was not unstained even before her connection with him to the rank of his wife. The exaltation of Eleanor Cobham to be Duchess of Gloucester afforded a proof of weakness which necessarily lessened the

* Hall.

CHAP. X. respect of the nobility for a prince so easily induced to sacrifice his reputation when his pleasures were concerned.

Early in the regency a struggle for the supremacy commenced between the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester. The government of the young king was the mutual object of men anxious to build their own power upon the favour of the sovereign. The citizens of London were warmly attached to Gloucester and testified their zeal in his support: their interference was visited by the prelate by acts of unwonted severity; many were impeached of treason and cast into prison; and avowedly to extinguish the mutinous spirit which his tyranny had occasioned he garrisoned the tower, giving orders to the commander Sir Richard Wydeville "to admit no one more powerful than himself."*

The Duke of Gloucester on his return from Hainault found the gates closed upon him, and retaliated by shutting those of the city of London against his rival. On the morning after this exclusion Beaufort's retinue attempted to force an entrance, and appearing in great numbers barricadoed the road, threatening to revenge the insult offered
1425. to their master by preventing the protector who had demanded an escort from the Lord Mayor of five hundred horse to guard him upon a visit to the king at Eltham, from passing out of the city. From the hostile aspect assumed on both sides an open war appeared to be unavoidable, but the effusion of blood was happily prevented by the indefatigable exertions of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the

* Hall.

Duke of Coimbra, a Portuguese prince,* who rode eight times in one day between the contending parties, and succeeded at last in persuading both to prosecute their feud no farther until the arrival of the Duke of Bedford, who was thus unseasonably called away from his duties in France to adjust the differences of his haughty kinsmen. The Bishop of Winchester dispatched an epistle† to the regent calculated to convince him of the necessity of his speedy appearance, and he hastened without delay to the scene of action. The conduct of Gloucester was too strongly opposed to the cautious prudence which characterized the Duke of Bedford to meet his approbation; he was likewise displeased with the part which the citizens of London had taken in the tumult, and did not receive a magnificent peace-offering which they presented on his arrival with his usual graciousness. He called a meeting of Peers at St. Alban's and a Parliament at Leicester, whither the members were desired to assemble unarmed;‡ but so strong a flame was enkindled between the uncle and the nephew that it required extreme vigilance to enforce the orders of the regent, and to prevent the decision of the sword from superseding a milder

* Hall.

† The contents of this spirited letter ran thus:

"I recommend me unto you with all my heart; and as you desire the welfare of the king our sovereign lord, and of his realms of England and France, and your own health and ours also, so haste you hither; for, by my troth, if you tarry we shall put this land in adventure with a field; such a brother you have here. God make him a good man. For your wisdom knoweth the, the profit of France standeth in the welfare of England."

‡ Fabian.

CHAP. X. process. Gloucester had prepared six articles against the Bishop of Winchester, of these four related to the personal grievances which he had received at his uncle's hands, and charged him with fortifying the tower with a design to make himself master of the king's person at Eltham;* with endeavouring to compass the protector's death by placing armed men to assault him on his route from London; and lastly with the treasonable purport of the letter which he had addressed to the Duke of Bedford.* The other two were founded upon an alleged representation of the late king whom Gloucester declared to have accused the Bishop of Winchester of an attempt to assassinate him and of an endeavour to persuade him to the dethronement of his father. The unremitting favour which Beaufort had enjoyed during the reign of Henry V. was a sufficient refutation of the latter charges, and Bedford unhesitatingly pronounced his belief in the innocence of the accused. The decision of the cause had been committed to eight lords who were to act as arbitrators, and their exertions produced an apology from the bishop which was accepted by Gloucester, and a solemn shew of reconciliation took place between them.

The prelate's conduct seems notwithstanding the slight concession required from him, to have excited considerable disapprobation; he was either desired or allowed to resign the chancellorship, and some time elapsed ere he could recover the [redacted]ance which he had lost by this triumph of h[redacted] but a consolation awaited him in the

* Hall.

dinal's hat in the next year, and we find him soon after this new accession of honours renewing the contest in the English cabinet. CHAP. X.

It was natural for the council of regency, while contemplating the ruinous effects resulting from the too speedy release of Richard II. from the trammels of his tutors, to consider the means of avoiding the recurrence of similar evils in the government of the young prince, and we cannot be surprised at the adoption of an exactly opposite system of education: but actuated by the same desire to retain the reins of power in their own hands which influenced the guardians of Henry's luckless predecessor, they studied only the readiest method of accomplishing this point, preferring to the dangers of favouritism, so amply illustrated in the last minority, the safer plan of reducing the young king to a state of mental slavery. Placed under the immediate care of the Earl of Warwick, a knight whose chivalric achievements were closely assimilated to the romantic deeds ascribed in England's wild legends to the far-famed Guy, instead of the warrior youth panting to emulate so bright an example, and to rush upon that crimson path of glory tracked by the footsteps of his gallant forefathers, we behold a meek and passive slave, acquirements only fitted for the cloister, and a mind so clouded by the darkest superstition that were it not for those qualities of the heart, those gentle virtues which can never exist in a world which presents so [redacted] incitements to vice without exciting affectio[redacted]spect, we should turn from the delineatio[redacted] Henry's character with contempt. It is difficult to account for the extraordinary poverty of

CHAP. X. spirit displayed in a pupil of the bold and martial Warwick, without supposing that an undue degree of severity was early exerted to subdue the temper of the royal infant; and this conclusion is borne out by the earl's application for power to inflict corporal punishment upon his charge, who was probably driven to amuse a mind not permitted to be employed in occupations fitted to prepare him for his high calling,* with the trifling pursuits of monkish idleness, absurd tales of witchcraft, and equally puerile chronicles of saints. The blame attached to this miserable perversion of intellect cannot be imputed to the Dukes of Bedford and Gloucester; the one was too deeply engaged in the arduous task of conducting the war in France in the first years of Henry's reign, to attend to the domestic concerns of his nephew, and his untimely death left the young king without a single friend possessed of sufficient weight and authority to interpose in his behalf; the other perpetually thwarted by the council soon lost even the shadow of power with which he had been invested.

The talents and virtues of Gloucester, which might if combined with prudence have been productive of the most beneficial effects to his country, were rendered useless by the unguarded warmth of his temper; he betrayed his love of rule to watchful enemies, and lessened the confidence of the reflective portion of the community by following the impulse of his feelings, when they were opposed to the interests of the nation; and obtaining only a gratifying but ineffective popularity from the lower orders, his political

* Paston Letters.

importance gradually decayed. An active party of determined enemies were continually devising the means of depressing him; his salary as protector sustained an annual reduction, and dwindled from eight to four thousand marks in the space of four years; and in the eighth year of the king's age and reign, his most persevering and successful rival Beaufort, in carrying a favourite measure, the coronation of the young monarch, deprived him of the title of protector, and though still placed at the head of the council, this elevation was merely nominal, and ceded only to his rank. Gloucester did not submit tamely to these mortifications; for a considerable period he maintained an unavailing struggle against the ecclesiastical confederacy which the cardinal headed,* but his efforts were unfortunate both to himself and to his country; his impatience and disappointment too openly displayed furnished his enemies with the weapons which they were not slow to employ to his injury, and in some degree justified the suspicions which they sedulously instilled into the ductile mind of the sovereign, who was early taught to regard his uncle of Gloucester with distrust; and the necessity of acquiring partizans was the chief cause of his warm patronage of the Duke of York, who under his friendly auspices grew into esteem with the people, and arose to eminence in the state.

* There were no less than five bishops beside the Cardinal in the council of the regency.

CHAPTER XI.

State of Affairs upon the Continent—Resolution to attack Orleans—Exertions of Charles VII.—Death of Salisbury before the Walls—Suffolk's Appointment—Christmas Festivities—Seizure of a Convoy—Distress of Charles VII.—Intrepidity of Dunois—Proposition of the French Commanders—Displeasure of the Duke of Burgundy—Despairing Resolutions of Charles VII.—Joan of Arc—Birth-place of the Maid of Orleans—her early Life and Character—The Fairy Tree—Joan's Visions—Political Opinions at Douremy—Joan's loyal Zeal—she determines to fly to the Rescue of Orleans—Belief of the Peasantry—Joan quits her Native Home—Distress of Charles VII.—Joan's Reception—Marvellous Reports—The Misery of the Besieged—Joan hastens to the Rescue—is permitted to enter the City—Terror of the English—Successful Sorties of the French—the Siege is raised—Retreat of the English—Joan attacks Jargeau—Suffolk made Prisoner—Victory at Patay—Efforts of the Duke of Bedford—Continued Successes of Charles VII.—he is crowned at Rheims—Joan's Request—her fatal Compliance—Bedford's Exertions—Spirited Conduct of the Cardinal—Bedford's Challenge—Exhaustion of both Parties—Charles VII.'s Message to the Duke of Burgundy—the latter renews the Treaty with England—Recommencement of the War—Last Victory of Joan of Arc—she is taken before Compeigne—Joy of the Allies—Ingratitude of the French—Cruel Fate of Joan—New Reverses sustained by the English—Intended Coronation of Henry VI. at Rheims—The English lose ground in France—Henry crowned at Paris—The War languishes—Death of the Duchess of Bedford—the Duke's second Marriage—Burgundy's Displeasure—Breach between Bedford and Burgundy—Overtures of the French King—Congress of Arras—Proposals of Peace—rejected by the English—Defection of Burgundy—Death of the Duke of Bedford.

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DURING the five first years of Henry's reign the English retained possession of the whole of the

territory torn by the late king from the crown of France: they had not however extended their conquests, and were prevented from following up the victories of Henry V. by the divisions which Gloucester's impolitic attempt upon Hainault produced. Charles VII. pent up in the provinces behind the Loire was permitted to exist in a state of comparative tranquillity for the space of four years, a period in which his utter ruin might have been effected; and though reduced to great extremity the hopes of his followers were revived by this enforced indolence upon the part of their enemies. The indefatigable exertions of the Duke of Bedford had at length restored harmony to the allies, and being furnished with an efficient army of twenty thousand men, he was persuaded it is said reluctantly to attack the French king in his strongest hold; as it was generally supposed that the fall of Orleans would lead to the final subjugation of France. It is not easy to guess how the expedition against the southern capital could have been made without the consent of the regent, yet in a letter addressed after its failure to the king his nephew, he denies that he was in any way instrumental to this unfortunate attempt. "All things prospered with you, till the tyme of the seage of Orleans, taken in hand God knoweth by what advice."*

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The Earl of Salisbury, the most celebrated amid the English generals was appointed to direct the operations against this important city. While on the other part Charles VII. rallied all his powers to maintain a vigorous resistance; and the inhabi-

* Parliament Rolls.

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tants in the wild energy of despair rushed to its defence, determined to perish to a man rather than to yield. Salisbury approached the place with the caution of an experienced soldier, crossed the river and invested it upon all sides. His first attack upon the Tourelles, a castle erected for the defence of the bridge, was gallantly carried, but the persevering industry of the besieged had raised a fort at the other end of the bridge which effectually impeded his farther progress, and Salisbury in surveying the preparations of the enemy from a window in the castle received a wound in the face from a cannon ball, which after the lapse of two days proved mortal, and the command devolved upon the Earl of Suffolk, grandson of Michael De La Pole, the unhappy favourite of Richard II., a nobleman destined to participate in the splendid misfortunes which befel nearly every individual belonging to his luckless race. Not endowed with that brilliant and commanding genius which had distinguished his predecessor, Suffolk yet possessed sufficient prudence to follow the plan which Salisbury had marked out,* and as the winter approached and the difficulties of storming the city increased he patiently sate down to a regular blockade, but without relaxing his exertions, keeping up a tremendous cannonade, and continually taking advantage of the darkness of the night to make fresh attacks upon the beleaguered walls. The festivities of Christmas produced a short cessation, and for the space of six hours a truce granted at the request of the English, permitted gentler sounds to supersede the roar of artillery

* Diary of the Siege of Orleans.

and the shout of defiance. One gay revel to the enlivening strains of trumpet and clarion, and again the fierce dissonance of ruthless war prevailed. Many gallant feats of arms were performed on both sides in the assaults, sallies, and skirmishes, which were of constant occurrence, and the Diary of the Siege of Orleans is in itself a manual for instruction in the deeds of chivalry.

A signal victory obtained in the beginning of Lent by Sir John Fastolf with an army of fifteen hundred men, who escorted four hundred waggons destined for the use of the besiegers, over a strong body of between three and four thousand troops which had been dispatched to intercept him, increased the exultation of the English and occasioned the most dismal forebodings on the part of the enemy.

The fall of Orleans now seemed to be inevitable. Charles VII. had exhausted all the resources which his misfortunes had left him in its defence, and no reasonable hope of its deliverance could be entertained; but the intrepidity of its defenders was still unabated. Dunois, a name which has come down to us radiant with the glory that surrounds it, together with St. Severe and Saintrailles, cheered the inhabitants and incited them to continue their desperate resistance: yet utterly despairing of the ultimate preservation of the apparently devoted city, they with the concurrence of the French king offered to surrender it into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy, upon the condition that he should hold it in strict neutrality during the war for the benefit of the Duke of Orleans, then a captive in England.

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The proposal was rejected by the Duke of Bedford, who could not consent to relinquish a prize which promised so soon to reward the arms of England for the blood and treasure lavished on its acquisition; but it is said that the refusal deeply offended the haughty Burgundian, although he reserved the manifestation of his anger for a more favourable moment.

While the assailants of Orleans flushed with hope looked forward to the speedy termination of their toils, and while Charles VII. meditated an inglorious retreat into Spain or into Scotland, one of those astonishing revolutions occurred which can only be attributed to the direct interposition of a superior power, by whom we are assured that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. There is nothing in the brightest page of fiction, more extraordinary nor more beautiful than the story of Joan of Arc, and it might even almost seem in vain that the curious inquirers of an incredulous age have attempted to divest her of that reputation for supernatural endowments which imparted confidence to her friends, and struck terror into her enemies. The simple fact, that a young, lowly, uneducated girl, starting from the most profound obscurity, actually effected the deliverance of France at a period when surrounding nations contemplated its utter ruin, appears sufficient to justify the opinion of those persons who believed her to be the favoured instrument of an over-ruling Providence. That the despairing hopelessness of the ministers of Charles VII. should have caught eagerly at the most remote chance of turning the tide which ran so strongly against them is not wonderful, nor can it be

a matter of surprise that an inexperienced enthusiastic woman, inflamed with the fervour of loyalty and patriotism, indulging in romantic dreams, and embodying the creations of a brilliant imagination, should stand forward at such a crisis ready to devote herself to danger and to death in defence of her suffering country; animated as she was by a strong trust that the impulse which guided her weak arm proceeded from a celestial source. It is the success alone that constitutes the miracle. No human foresight could have apprehended such a result, and no human contrivance could have produced it. The impostor however carefully instructed would have been crushed; the dupe, however confident in the visions of a distempered fancy, would have perished, had she not been upheld by the inscrutable being who controuls the universe. But Joan of Arc, more like the fabled messengers of classic mythology, the gods of the Greek drama, sent down from heaven to counteract the designs of triumphant despots, than a mortal agent, opposed herself to a host inured to victory and changed the destinies of France and England. Sober history presents no parallel to the brilliant and rapid career of the extraordinary champion, who by a chain of marvellous exploits gave independence to a nation submitting in hopeless despondence to a foreign yoke. * The maid of Orleans was born at Domremy, a small hamlet situated between Neufchâteau and Vaucouleurs in Champagne; her youth was spent in tending sheep for her parents who were poor and simple people. From the earliest age she had manifested

* Memoirs of Jeanne D'Arc.

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great sweetness and gentleness of disposition, a taste for the beauties of nature, and the warmest and most unaffected piety. She shunned the joyous revel, the song and the dance, when all the village poured out its rustic throng into the street, and would retire to a holy edifice to chaunt hymns to the Virgin. Constant in prayer when her occupations did not permit her to attend the bell which summoned her neighbours to church, she would kneel down and offer up her fervent orisons in the fields. At a short distance from Domremy there was a magnificent beech-tree, which had long been an object of veneration to the surrounding villagers. It was called the Fairy Tree, and every year in the month of May it was the custom for gay troops of the young of both sexes to hang wreaths of spring flowers on its boughs, and to dance beneath its luxuriant foliage to the music of their own voices: a fountain welled up beside it, and the bright waters and the green shade were reported to have been in elder times the sylvan haunt of fairies, who it was believed even now still lingered though invisible around the spot. This delicious place, and a small chapel dedicated to the virgin called the Hermitage of St. Mary, often invited Joan to their solitudes, when her neighbours sought relaxation from toil in social converse with each other; and here at the age of thirteen she first gave the reins to an imagination which shaped out glorious visions in the sun-beams, and heard voices in the sighing gales and rippling waters.

When the young and ardent are deeply imbued with religious feelings, and conscious of the presence of the Deity, are continually pouring out the aspira-

tions of their hearts in prayer, little of illusion is wanting to give a fleeting reality to the idea presented by the mind; the eye in such a state of mental excitation may gaze upon the brightness of the atmosphere until dazzled by excess of light it fancies that heaven itself is disclosing its radiant inhabitants in the brilliant forms which float before it; and when there is a deep oraculous voice within, for ever speaking to the heart, the music of the winds, the rustling of the leaves and the bubbling of gently-flowing springs may be easily converted into distinct and articulate sounds, the echoes of intense and restless thought. Joan of Arc was early impressed with a persuasion that she was destined for some high and lofty purpose, and the disasters which befel her youthful sovereign appeared to her to point out the nature of her mission.

The political storm which had shaken and divided France was felt in the district which she inhabited. The population of Domremy, with one exception, espoused the cause of Charles VII. against the Burgundian faction. Their immediate neighbours at Marcey favoured the interests of the party who had allied themselves to Henry; and this dissimilarity of sentiment often engaged the villagers in broils with each other. Joan, a warm partizan of the legitimate heir of France, grieved for his depression with all a woman's strong and ardent feeling. A vague notion that her efforts were to rescue him from his adversaries seemed at first to pervade her mind. She frequently exclaimed that she must go into France, though without explaining the exact duties which she believed herself to be appointed to fulfil. Her

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parents watched her narrowly least she should accompany those bands of soldiers who occasionally passed through the place, and she was deterred by their opposition from following the impulse of her wishes, until the close investiture of Orleans by the English menaced the fall of that important city. Then the heroic girl was no longer to be restrained. She declared that she was commissioned by heaven to raise the siege, and to crown the king at Rheims. Vehemently persisting that she was urged by saints and angels continually appearing before her in palpable and dazzling forms to accomplish the will of a Divine being; the innocence and sanctity of her past life gave weight to her assertions; the surrounding peasantry looked upon her as one inspired, and the event proved that they were not deceived. The crowned visions and celestial voices which companied her solitude, might have been and doubtless were the phantasies of a highly-wrought imagination; but the deep and settled purpose of her soul, her untiring zeal and trusting confidence must have been derived from that mysterious power whose ways are hidden from the eye of man. Joan of Arc became the universal theme of conversation throughout the province. Baudricourt the feudal lord of Vaucoleurs who had at first treated her application to him with contempt, was induced to regard her with complaisance; and to second her views he supplied her with a sword, a horse, and a recommendation to the king; after which, escorted by seven persons, who were bound by oath to conduct her in safety to the monarch's court, she departed in the most fearless reliance upon that prophetic spirit

which assured her that she was born for the enterprize, and should overcome the numberless obstacles which opposed themselves to its success.

Many circumstances combined to procure the maid a courteous reception from the king. His affairs were desperate; his friends were few and weak; his treasury absolutely exhausted; no change of fortune could add to distresses which even now threatened to send him a fugitive from the fair seat of his inheritance; and in the exigence of the moment he was willing to adopt measures which in times of prosperity would have been rejected with disdain. This state of things may account, very rationally for the patronage afforded by Charles VII. and his courtiers to a female adventurer, but does not in the least degree diminish the wonder excited by her faithful accomplishment of every promise which she made in the deliverance of Orleans and the capture of Rheims. Charles and his council after numerous consultations and the closest inquiries concerning her former life and morals, determined that the ardent pleader should be sent as she desired to the relief of Orleans. The king's partizans, to whom even a momentary advantage was of consequence, did not allow so favourable an opportunity to escape them; and they gave studious celebrity to this unexpected supporter of their cause.

The hopes of the credulous were revived by the appearance of so extraordinary a champion, and the zeal and simplicity of the maid, her entire devotion to the interests of France, and her enthusiastic piety, inspired all who approached her with sentiments of awe and wonder: she was not feigning nor

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maintaining a character, and her straight-forward energy proved far more useful to the crafty politicians of the time than the most consummate deceit. Joan it is at the same time to be acknowledged was prone to believe all things which tended to support her fond expectations, and thus without compromising her own integrity she might assist in many deceptions which were practised to catch the vulgar eye. The besieging army at first ridiculed the maid's pretensions, but a continual succession of marvellous reports produced a strong impression upon the minds of the soldiers, that either the powers of heaven or those of hell were leagued against them.

The city of Orleans was now reduced to a state of extreme distress by famine; a chain of sixty bastilles encompassed the city to prevent the entrance of succours: and Charles VII. having provided a convoy at Blois consisting of seven thousand men, Joan of Arc obtained leave to accompany the expedition. From that place she sent a letter to the Earl of Suffolk, commanding him to obey the divine will in retiring from the siege, and on the twenty-
1429. seventh of April she passed through the enemy's lines and entered the city, the English apparently stupified by their astonishment, scarcely making an effort to intercept her. An achievement attended with such difficulty and danger convinced the most incredulous that they were now to contend with a person armed with no ordinary power, whilst the hopes of the besieged were raised in a proportionate degree. The French followed up their advantage, and the maid, carrying a sword which was said to have been obtained through the medium of her

attendant saints, and having a banner borne before her covered with mysterious emblems, headed each sortie of the garrison. Her first attack was upon the strong bastille of St. Paul, which she reduced to ashes, and a second even more obstinately defended upon a fortification which had been considered impregnable, after a well contested action of fourteen hours, in which she received a wound, was also carried, with great loss upon the English part. CHAP. XI.

The besiegers were now thrown into consternation; and utterly depressed, the Earl of Suffolk dared not trust to the result of another action. At a council of war held in the night, it was resolved to abandon the siege, and the next morning the English forces were drawn up at a short distance from the walls ready to turn and attack the enemy in the plain, upon the least attempt to impede their retreat. But it was Sunday, and Joan's reverence for the sabbath restrained her usual impatience for the fight. She would not sanction the shedding of blood on the day of the Lord, and the English who, in the exasperated state of their feelings, would probably have engaged in the combat with all their wonted hardihood, waited several hours in suspense, and compelled at last to retire without a blow, after spreading a wide conflagration through their elaborate entrenchments, the diligent labours of seven months, marched in sullen grief from the fatal spot. Suffolk retreated to Jargeau, and strengthened the neighbouring fortresses with his soldiers. 1429. May 8.

The English after this period experienced a succession of disgraces. Joan of Arc, since her late triumphs universally denominated the Maid of Orleans, called

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upon Charles VII. to follow her to Rheims, and attacking the Earl of Suffolk in Jargeau, performed
June 12. prodigies of valour before the place which she compelled to surrender, the earl himself being taken prisoner.* Mehun, Baugeney, and other fortresses submitted to her arms, and in a general action upon
June 18, 1429. the plain of Patay, she scattered her enemies like a destroying angel. Struck with a sudden panic, not even the voice and the example of the gallant Talbot could induce the soldiers to face that miraculous banner which they believed to be the work of a malignant demon. Talbot, whose very name had been sufficient to put the French to flight, contended almost singly in the field. Overpowered by numbers he was obliged to yield. Sir John Fastolf, hitherto a distinguished captain, withdrew at the first onset in unconquerable alarm. Twelve hundred men were killed or taken prisoners, and the remainder were hotly pursued in their rapid retreat as far as Meun.

The Duke of Bedford vainly attempted to stem the adverse current of fortune. He applied to England and to Burgundy for succours, but the latter was now only feebly inclined to the cause, and a divided cabinet and a nation unwilling to lavish their wealth upon a war which no longer promised to be successful, prevented the acquisition

* Suffolk being obliged to yield, demanded of the officer who required him to surrender his sword, if he were a knight? "No!" replied the captor. "Then," exclaimed the proud noble, refusing to submit to one of less degree, "receive the honour from me;" and knighting him upon the spot, immediately gave up the weapon with which he had performed the ceremony. —*Monstrelet. Hall.*

of such ample supplies as could alone have proved of essential service in an hour like that.

Affection for the house of Valois and anxiety to secure the national independence, revived in the bosoms of the French, hitherto quietly submitting to foreign rule. Charles in his progress to his coronation did not meet with the slightest opposition; many towns opened their gates to receive him, others were content to remain neutral, and the citizens of Rheims rose upon the Burgundian garrison and drove them beyond the walls.* Shouts and acclamations attested the joy of the inhabitants at the return of their youthful sovereign. They crowned him with less of the usual pomp and splendour than had graced former occasions, but with a warmth of affectionate loyalty which must have fully compensated for the absence of jewels and ermine.

The Maid of Orleans who assisted at the ceremony, now declared her mission to be completed, and kneeling at the feet of the monarch entreated permission to return home. The king at this time fully conscious of the value of her services effectually combatted her modest wish; she consented to remain with the army, and to aid him in expelling the English from France. Human nature could scarcely have been proof against the temptation thus offered, the gratification of that love of fame and popularity almost inherent in every noble breast, and which it is impossible that Joan should not have felt in the strongest degree; but it was for her an unfortunate decision. Though the prosperity of Charles continued her success declined, and a

* Rymer, x. 432.

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series of disasters led at last to a miserable captivity and a cruel death.

In the mean time the Duke of Bedford was not idle; he procured fresh assurances of friendship from his Burgundian ally, who sent a reinforcement of troops amounting to five thousand men, and the same supply from England enabled him to take the field: for the latter he was indebted to his uncle Cardinal Beaufort, who displayed a spirit of patriotism which exposed him to the censure of religious zealots.* Placed at the head of a small army raised through the pressing entreaties of the pope, and intended for a crusade against the reformers of Bohemia, he readily consented to relinquish the persecution of heresy, and to defend the interests of England with the swords of his followers. Charles VII. loudly complained of this sacrilegious perversion of the arms of the church; and though it gave present safety to the Bohemians it afforded little assistance to the regent.

The war languished in despite of all the duke's efforts, for Charles wisely avoided a general engagement. Not of a temper to be roused by insult he returned no answer to a challenge in which the indignant Bedford, willing to stake the cause of his country upon his own sword, had defied him to meet him singly in the field. But Bedford being compelled to hasten into Normandy, the French king availed himself of so favourable a circumstance to advance to the capital. The attempt which was unsuccessful, ended the campaign for that year, and the monarch retired into winter quarters at Bourges.

* Parliament Rolls, v. 433.

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The influence of the Duchess of Bedford, sister of the Duke of Burgundy, prevented the defection of her brother. Charles sent an embassy to propose a reconciliation and to offer satisfaction for the murder of his father; the Burgundian council generally approved of the terms, and the duke was inclined to accede to them, but his sister's ardent solicitations prevailed, and he consented upon the payment of twenty-five thousand nobles to put an end to the negociation, and to take the command of the united armies in the commencement of fresh hostilities.

1430. May 25.

The duke directed his forces against Compeigne; the Maid of Orleans was dispatched to its relief. On her progress she defeated a party of Burgundians; but sullied her triumph by ordering the commander, Franquet, to be beheaded. The crisis of her own fate was at hand. She had scarcely entered the city ere she quitted it to head an attack upon the besiegers; she advanced to the action with her usual heroism, was thrice repulsed, and returned thrice to the charge; compelled at length to retreat, the last to fly, and fighting as she fled, she reached the barrier in safety, still facing her enemies, and maintaining the combat in the generous endeavour to provide for the security of her companions in arms. Influenced by terror or by treachery they flung themselves into the city and closed the gates behind them,* leaving Joan of Arc to a fearful and a hopeless struggle with foes already flushed with victory. Thus cruelly abandoned the courage of the maid did not forsake her; she made an attempt to cut her

* Monstrelet.

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desperate way through her assailants and to gain the open country, but overpowered by numbers she was dragged from her horse and taken prisoner.

The English and the Burgundians received the news of Joan's captivity with triumphant exultation, while the French though at first panic-struck by so great a misfortune soon perceived that they no longer stood in need of her almost miraculous assistance; and pleased to conquer without the aid of a female arm, with a degree of ingratitude if possible more criminal than the brutal persecution of her enemies, left her to the merciless revenge of men, who unwilling to confess her superior prowess, stifled every feeling which might have pleaded for a helpless woman's life, in the alleged conviction that they were delivering up a sorceress to the justice of the outraged laws.

The close of Joan of Arc's career was worthy of the splendour of its commencement; she sustained a long and painful imprisonment with unyielding fortitude, underwent the mockery of a trial with a spirit which baffled her accusers, and resigned herself at last to an inhuman death with the fervent piety of a martyr. The execution of this heroic girl will be a stain upon the memory of the Duke of Bedford, which will last so long as the names of England and France shall remain upon record.

Joan of Arc made two unsuccessful attempts to escape from the power of her enemies during a captivity of several months, in which the ungrateful associates in her late victories resigned her to her fate without an effort to procure her liberation by ransom from the Burgundians, by whom she had

been captured. The troops of Charles continued their triumphant career, and stung to madness by repeated reverses the English condescended to gratify a cowardly revenge by the persecution of a defenceless woman. The hapless object of a baffled enemy's hatred was conveyed to Rouen, loaded with chains and exposed to the brutal attendance of three English guards who treated their prisoner with the most cruel indignity. Nothing was left undone to force the Maid of Orleans to admit that she had formed an unholy league with evil spirits. She underwent frequent examinations before a council headed by her most inveterate enemy the Bishop of Beauvais and devoted to her ruin; and though at last bewildered by the fearful accusations of heresy and witchcraft which were brought against her, and the terrors of an agonizing death, she was prevailed upon to declare that she had been deceived by those apparitions which she had fondly mistaken for guardian saints and angels, no threat could extort the confession of a single error against the faith of Rome; and she defeated all the subtle devices of artful men to entrap her into the avowal of opinions contrary to the tenets of the church. Joan confidently appealed to the decision of the pope, but her inhuman judges intent upon her destruction would not allow her the opportunity of defending herself before a less prejudiced tribunal; they took advantage of her attachment to the masculine garb in which she had achieved so many wonders to procure a condemnation, which they dared not to pronounce without this evidence of her obstinacious adherence to her own will against the commands of her spiritual directors;

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and exulting at having at length caught her in the toils they dragged their victim to the market place at Rouen, where in the midst of a crowd of spectators, invoking the name of her Saviour and pressing a wooden cross presented by a pitying soldier to her bosom, she was burned at the stake in the presence of the Bishop of Winchester and of many noblemen and gentlemen of England.

Though the maiden warrior whose arm had rescued her devoted country was reduced to ashes, the perpetrators of the cruel deed were still unprosperous. In order to counteract the powerful influence which Charles VII. had gained in the hearts of his people by his coronation at Rheims, a ceremony which was supposed to ratify the title of the sovereign and to give him a strong claim to the allegiance of his subjects, the Duke of Bedford resolved to conduct his infant nephew to receive the regal investment at the same place. Already
1429. crowned with the English diadem at Westminster, Henry prepared to depart for his foreign dominions. The difficulty of raising men and money delayed the young king's journey for six months, and in this period several blows fatal to his interests were struck in France. The English could now no longer entertain a hope of the recovery of Rheims. Paris therefore was fixed upon as the scene of this im-
1430. May. portant ceremony; and thither Henry of Lancaster proceeded eighteen months after his more fortunate rival had been anointed with the holy oil, in a city to which religious motives had given a national
1431. preference. At Paris nothing of outward splendour was wanting to grace the performance; but com-

pelled by necessity to abandon many long-established usages the French people could not recognize a coronation in the maimed rites performed by foreigners and unsanctioned by the presence of the nobles of the kingdom, the peers of France, whose public homage to the new sovereign was so essential both to the dignity and the security of the throne. After a residence of a few days at Paris the king was removed to Rouen and thence to England; and the whole journey may be said to have proved expensive and unprofitable.

Nothing material happened during the two following years; neither party were in a condition to perform any decisive action, yet both still intent upon conquest were unwilling to negociate for peace. The death of the Duchess of Bedford in the year 1432 dissolved the friendship which, though so often wavering and uncertain, had continued to subsist between the English and the Burgundians from the period of the murder of John father of the reigning duke by the friends of the dauphin. The bond loosened by the demise of one always so actively employed in soothing the angry passions of her kinsman, was snapped asunder by the hasty and somewhat inconsiderate marriage of the regent with 1433.
Jacqueline of Luxembourg. The duke's proud spirit resented the disapprobation of his brother-in-law; and instead of the kind mediator whose gentle pleadings had never failed to produce peace, interested enemies increased their mutual dissatisfaction, and so completely were the two dukes estranged that when Cardinal Beaufort, anxiously desirous to promote a reconciliation, had persuaded

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them to meet each other at St. Omer, some trifling punctilio too strenuously insisted upon by both prevented a personal interview, and they departed in irremediable disgust.*

Charles VII. had long eagerly watched for a division between the allies, and it was now no longer difficult to detach the Duke of Burgundy from the interests of England: the most rigid justice must have been satisfied in the great revenge which he had accomplished against his father's murderers, and he was only withheld from openly declaring for the French king in consideration of the oath he had taken not to agree to a peace without the consent of England. The dissolution of the alliance between Burgundy and Henry VI. was effected at a congress held at Arras, in which the pope offered his services in mediating a treaty which should put an end to the ravages of war. The meeting was crowded with princes, nobles and prelates; and all Christendom, in sending their envoys to attend it, seemed to be interested in the negociation. It was not possible, however, to reconcile the jarring interests of the two countries. To England the continent had long been a theatre of martial exercises and a source of fame and wealth.† The nobility gained great riches by the government of cities, the plunder of castles and the ransom of prisoners; and nothing, save the gratification of national vanity in some high-sounding acquisition, could have induced rapacious and self-willed men to forego these advantages. Even the Duke of Bedford is reported to have been influenced in rejecting the terms proposed; terms certainly more honourable

* Monstrelet. † Hall.

than any that were subsequently offered by his disinclination to relinquish the splendour and the profit attached to the regency.

The French government declared their willingness to yield Normandy and Guienne to Henry, upon condition that he should pay the usual homage for these provinces, and formally renounce his pretensions to the title of King of France. The English who had so nearly grasped the whole kingdom could not agree to remain satisfied with the possession of two provinces important as they were; although they perceived with dismay, by the good understanding which subsisted between the French and the Burgundians, that henceforward they must fight their battles singly; the remembrance of former glories rendered them unable to form a cool judgment upon the present position of affairs, and they refused the proposal. Upon the departure of the Duke of Bedford, who with the English nobles and their followers immediately quitted Arras, the friends of Charles VII. negociated a separate peace between the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, which was accepted on the plea that the English had disregarded the duke's interests, in rejecting terms which would have preserved the balance of power between France and England and secured the safety of the great fiefs of the former crown. The Duke of Burgundy wrote an explanation of his conduct, to the young King of England and Henry, a monarch early taught to weep, received the letter with tears.* Worn out by continual service, and deeply wounded by the defection

1435.

* Monstrelet.

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of his old ally and the disastrous consequences which it portended, the gallant Bedford sunk under the pressure of hopeless anxiety; and before the congress at Arras had dispersed his gallant spirit fled. The duke died at Rouen justly esteemed both by friends and foes. Inferior to his martial brother only in fortune, he greatly surpassed him in the endearing qualities of the heart. With the single exception of the cold-blooded murder of Joan of Arc, to which he must be said to have more than consented, not an instance of cruelty has been laid to his charge during the conduct of a long, obstinate and sanguinary war.

Sept. 14, 1435.

CHAPTER XII.

Continued Hostility between Gloucester and Beaufort—Gloucester's unsuccessful Exertion—Policy of the Cabinet—Accession of Suffolk to Beaufort's Party—Contention in the Council—Triumph of the Confederation—Disputes concerning Henry's Marriage—Gloucester's Indignation—Ascendance of the Cardinal—Malevolence of Gloucester's Enemies—Persecution of the Duchess of Gloucester—The King's Mind poisoned—Charge against the Duchess—Condemnation of her Associates—their Execution—Penance imposed upon the Duchess—her perpetual Imprisonment—Second Marriage of Queen Catharine—Death of Catharine—Imprisonment of Owen Tudor—Marriage of the Duchess of Bedford—Wydeville's Elevation to the Peerage—Union of the rival Roses—State of the War in France—Truce between England and France—Negotiation for the King's Marriage—Power given to Suffolk—Gloucester's unsuccessful Opposition—Poverty of the Duke of Anjou—Suffolk's Embassy—Arrival of the Queen—Gallantry of the Nobles—Festivities in London—Honours bestowed upon four Peers—Embarrassments of the Crown—Margaret loses the Affection of the People—The Duke of Gloucester presumptive Heir—Alleged Conspiracy against Gloucester—Parliament summoned at Bury—Unusual Precautions—Gloucester's Arrest—his mysterious Death—Condemnation of Gloucester's Retainers—they are pardoned—Suffolk enriched by Gloucester's Death—Gloucester's Character—Death of Cardinal Beaufort.

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THE feud which had so early commenced between the Duke of Gloucester and his uncle Cardinal Beaufort became more fierce and deadly in every ensuing year; the prelate and his ecclesiastical associates

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had removed Gloucester from the protectorate when the king had attained his ninth year, upon the pretence that Henry was already capable of governing without such assistance; yet the same persons sedulously prevented the monarch's participation in public business, even when he had arrived at the verge of manhood.* At seventeen his modest desire to be present at the deliberations of the council was refused. Gloucester more spirited than prudent openly resented their exclusion of the sovereign from their debates, and the neglect which he himself experienced in the cabinet. He ardently desired to supply the place of his brother in France, and continually offered his services to head the army against Charles. It was the policy of Cardinal Beaufort to procure peace, and public good was forgotten or disdained in the eager desire to thwart the measures of his political antagonist; so that while these statesmen constantly espoused opposite questions, Gloucester had the mortification to find himself invariably defeated.

Beaufort's party after the decease of the Duke of Bedford was strengthened in its political ascendance by the junction of the Earl of Suffolk, a man of more ambition than capacity, of greater courage than conduct; determined to effect two objects, each of the highest importance, the marriage of the king and a pacific treaty with France, by his own and his party's influence; their ultimate benefit to the country was a secondary consideration to this aspiring minister, and he trusted it should seem wholly to fortune to

* Parliament Rolls.

maintain him on the dizzy height which he so fearlessly ascended.

The release of the Duke of Orleans who had remained in captivity since the battle of Azincourt, resolved upon by Suffolk and his colleagues and resolutely opposed by Gloucester, was carried after warm and passionate debates. The duke weary of his long imprisonment was prodigal in the promises of the exertion of his influence to procure an honourable peace. Suffolk depended upon the interest of the Duke of Orleans with Charles VII., whilst Gloucester more justly feared that the communications which his protracted residence in England would enable him to make respecting the state of the country, would induce the French king to impose hard conditions upon an enemy whose resources were so nearly exhausted.

Henry's marriage afforded another fertile subject of dispute. At one time a hope had been entertained of effecting an alliance between the king and the daughter of Charles VII., but her union with the son of the Duke of Burgundy defeated this expectation; a second match which met with Gloucester's warm concurrence was proposed with the daughter of Count Armagnac, who would have brought Gascony and Auvergne as her portion, an important acquisition to England. The interposition however of Suffolk prevented this marriage from taking place, to the high indignation of those who were aware of its advantages.* Gloucester had rendered his adversaries fully acquainted with the opinion which he entertained of them; he had

* Fabian.

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openly accused the cardinal to the king of the assumption* of almost regal power, to the prejudice of his associates in council, and with amassing enormous wealth by unjust and illegal means. Henry was easily persuaded that his uncle had imbibed a causeless animosity against the prelate, whose influence in the cabinet was too great to allow the discussion of these heavy charges to end in his disgrace, "those who feared and those who favoured him,"† composed the majority; he continued at the head of administration, and the party to whom Gloucester's bold censure had revealed such unpalatable sentiments, dissembled their resentment until an opportunity occurred in which they could display it with effect. The duke had declared that there were too many ecclesiastics amid the statesmen who composed the council of regency, and the expression was not forgotten.

At a period when ballads against Lollardy formed a part of coronation festivities, and heretics were yearly brought to the stake, Gloucester though he did not hesitate to punish the excesses of the reformers, yet shewed himself friendly to a more temperate line of conduct towards those who professed the doctrines of Wickliffe, than the bigot zeal of churchmen permitted. He was the friend and patron of Reginald Peacocke, who subsequently incurred the punishment of perpetual imprisonment for daring dissent from the established creed; and he one who was in some degree connec with, and who bore the name of, the most [illegible]uished martyr of the proscribed faith,

* Hall. † Hall.

Lord Cobham. It was through this lady that a deadly blow was aimed against the Duke of Gloucester. Unfortunately the disparity of her rank with that of her illustrious husband, joined to the lightness of her reputation, rendered her open to the machinations of men who would scarcely have dared to attack the wife of a prince of the blood, had her birth been equally splendid, and her virtue without a stain.

Attempts had been frequently made to impress the mind of the king with the belief that his uncle thirsted for power, and would assuredly rule the state according to his own will were he not prevented by continual watchfulness; and this ideas eems always to have inclined Henry to place the most affectionate confidence in Cardinal Beaufort, whilst Gloucester was comparatively little esteemed. Henry was now informed that the Duchess of Gloucester had employed herself in concert with Margery Jourdemayn, a re- 1441.
puted witch, and three other accomplices, in diabolic practices for the discovery of hidden means by which his dissolution might be accomplished, through a slow disease, fastened upon him by spells and incantations. Credulous, to the extreme of weakness in the belief of the power of sorcery, and entertaining a religious horror of the forbidden art, no method could have more effectually increased the suspicions which Henry already entertained of his uncle's loyalty. The enemies of the Duchess of Gloucester were actuated by the most artful policy when they brought the charge of magic against her; a crime heinous in the eyes of the ignorant, and calculated to provoke popular indignation and to prevent that

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sympathy which the people by whom her husband, surnamed "the good," was adored, would have naturally felt for her, under a less horrible imputation. The conjectures of Fox and other old writers render it not improbable that she had exposed herself to the persecution of the church for her religious opinions.

Bolingbroke, one of the Duchess of Gloucester's alleged confederates, was an ecclesiastic, celebrated for his learning and his knowledge of astronomy. The other two, Southwell and Hume, were also priests. Of these the latter received a pardon, an extension of mercy not usual to one accused of the crime of treason,* and, which therefore renders the supposition but too probable that he had been made instrumental in the ruin of the unfortunate individuals, who were involved in the charge of a conspiracy to compass the king's death. Southwell died in prison before the commencement of his trial, but Bolingbroke suffered all the penalties of the law, in addition to the hideous mockery to which the Roman Catholic church has ever exposed its victims. Fantastically arrayed, and surrounded with strange devices, the supposed instruments of his sorcery, he was set up in a high chair at St. Paul's to the gaze of the populace, and thence, declaring his innocence to the last moment of his life, drawn to the gallows at Tyburn where he was hanged and beheaded. The fires of Smithfield were kindled for the wretched woman associated with him in the charge of witchcraft; Margery Jourdemayn was burned at the stake, and Eleanor Cobham (Duchess of Gloucester),

* Fabian.

though her life was spared, was condemned to perform public penance in the streets of London: bareheaded and with waxen tapers in her hands she was led on three several days through the principal thoroughfares of the city, and then consigned to an imprisonment which ended only with her existence.*

We have no record to inform us how the proud and lofty spirit of Gloucester bore the degradation of one so nearly connected with him. This tragical occurrence, though it must have convinced him of the malice of his enemies, did not subdue his opposition; he still dared to speak the truth, and manfully though vainly strove to prevent those ruinous measures by which Suffolk climbed to power.

The necessity of mentioning the marriages of two illustrious widows, whose second unions gave a long line of monarchs to England, will afford the reader a short repose from the sickening detail of political intrigue. Queen Catharine, who with the characteristic gaiety of her country mourned not long for her gallant and accomplished husband, suffered her admiration of the personal beauty of Owen Tudor, a simple Welch knight, to subdue the pride of birth; the fair and royal matron became the wife of a commoner who had charmed her eyes at a ball: for it is said, that "being a courtly and active gentleman, he was commanded once to dance before the queen,† and in a turne, not being able to recover himself,

* She was allowed 100 marks a year for her support; Chester and Kenilworth castles are mentioned as the places of her confinement, but she was finally removed to the Isle of Man, and died in that dreary exile. *Stow.*

There, according to the report of certain grave historians, she still walketh. – *Waldron's Isle of Man.*

† Drayton's Epistles.

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fell into her lap as she sate on a little stoole with many of her ladies about her." Sandford bears witness to the excellence of Catharine's taste in the selection of a husband thus singularly introduced; the person of Owen Tudor he tells us, was "so absolute in all the lineaments of his body, that the only contemplation of it might make a queen forget all other circumstances."* Three sons were the fruit of this union, the two elder, Edmund and Jasper, were created Earls of Richmond and Pembroke, by their half-brother, "with pre-eminence," says Fuller, "to take place above all earls, for kings have absolute authority in dispensing honours;" the younger entered into a religious community and died a monk. After the death of Catharine, which happened in 1437, the government thought fit to punish the temerity of the bold knight who had dared to snatch the hand of a queen, and Owen Tudor was committed to the Tower; but not of a disposition to submit tamely to confinement, the hardy Welchman either by fraud or force contrived to effect his escape. A contemporary writer in recording the prisoner's attempt, makes an assertion which goes far to disprove the ostentatious accounts so industriously circulated by Henry VII. and his partizans, respecting the royal descent of that monarch's paternal ancestor.

* Queen Catharine, being a Frenchwoman born, knew no difference betweene the English and Welch nation, until her marriage being published, Owen Tudor's kindred and countrey were objected to disgrace him as most vile and barbarous, which made her desire to see some of his kinsmen. Whereupon he brought to her presence John Ap Meredith and Howell Ap Llewellyn Ap Howell, his neare cozens, men of goodly stature and personage, but wholly destitute of bringing up and nurture, for when the queene had spoken to them in divers languages and they were not able to answer her, she said, "that they were the goodliest dumb creatures that ever she saw."—*Wynne's History of the Gwedir Family.*

The passage in the chronicle runs thus: "This same year one Oweyn, *no man of birth neither of livelihood*, broke out of Newgate against night at searching time, through help of his priest, and went his way hurting foule his keeper. The which Owen had privily wedded the Queen Katherine, and had three or four children by her, unweeting the common people, till that she was dead and buried."*

Constancy after death was not it should appear one of the virtues of the age. The Duchess of Bedford speedily banished the recollection of her warrior lord, and becoming enamoured of a brave knight, Sir Richard Wydeville, descended from the high eminence to which she had been raised for the love of one who possessed little recommendation besides the accomplishments of mind and person. This union was less offensive to the feelings of the royal family than that of Catharine had been. Sir Richard Wydeville, who had served with honour in the wars of France, was considered worthy of exaltation to the peerage, and was ennobled shortly after his marriage, being created a baron with the title of Lord Rivers. These marriages notwithstanding the disparity in the rank of the parties must be called auspicious. Henry VII. grandson of Owen Tudor, and Elizabeth of England granddaughter of Sir Richard Wydeville, were destined to unite the claims of two royal houses, and to put an end to those bloody dissensions which had destroyed so many princes who were born to brighter expectations of the crown.

The war with France had been carried on in a desultory manner during the last ten years by the

* Harl. MS. 565.

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English with occasional successes, which supported the national reputation; but whilst brilliant achievements evinced the courage and skill of the warriors who still stoutly maintained their ground, the position which Charles had assumed was too formidable to admit a hope of eventual conquest. Peace seemed to be an absolute necessity, and Suffolk in procuring this boon for his country would have entitled himself to its everlasting gratitude, had he been more scrupulous respecting the terms: but however willing to consult his own personal aggrandizement alone, he found it impossible to harmonize the discordant pretensions of France and England, and the
1444. insurmountable difficulties which attended a permanent treaty induced both kingdoms to accede to a truce for two years, which promised to pave the way to more effectual accommodation. Henry was at this time a mere cypher in the hands of his ministers; but they were aware that the continuation of their power must depend upon the lady who should be given to him for a wife; he was anxious to be married, and by selecting a princess who could only attribute her exaltation to their exertions, they hoped to secure a never-failing ally. The choice so important to the House of Lancaster fell upon Margaret of Anjou, the niece of Charles VII.'s queen. Her relationship to the French monarch, and the favour which she enjoyed at his court,* were plausibly urged as a sufficient atonement for her poverty; the family possessions consisted solely of high-sounding titles, her father was styled King of Sicily and Jerusalem, and Duke of Maine and Anjou; these latter dominions had been seized by the English

* Hall.

early in the war, and the countries over which he claimed regal sovereignty owned other lords. It required no small degree of sophistry to prove the eligibility of such an alliance; Suffolk was not blind to the difficulties which attended his negociation, and he prevailed upon the king and the parliament to sign an instrument which empowered him to act according to the dictates of his own judgment, and exonerated him from all responsibility for errors which so wide a latitude might occasion. Thus free to follow the impulse of ambitious feelings, and sanctioned in the most inconsiderate sacrifices of the national interest by his friends in the cabinet, Suffolk easily arranged the preliminaries of this unpropitious marriage. Regnier the father of the lady took advantage of the English monarch's ardent desire to obtain the hand of Margaret, to require the cession of Anjou, Mons, and the conté of Maine territories which could not be given up without endangering the loss of Normandy; and, after a strong but fruitless resistance on the part of the Duke of Gloucester,* these dearly-bought and valuable conquests were relinquished to a vassal of France. The impoverished condition of the titular King of Sicily's finances, would not admit of his sending his daughter with proper state to England, the expenses therefore of her splendid progress from Tours were to be defrayed by her affianced husband. Suffolk took care that the princess of his choice should be introduced with suitable magnificence, accompanied by several noble personages, "having with them," says Holingshed, "many costly chariots and gorgeous horse litters," he proceeded on his mission, and

* Fabian.

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having married the lady as the proxy of Henry, in the presence of the French court, escorted the bride to her new dominions. The report of Margaret's accomplishments and the admiration excited by her exterior charms, procured her an enthusiastic reception from all ranks and classes; even those who had opposed the marriage from principle hastened now that it was irrevocably concluded to give assurance to the queen that they had not been actuated in their conduct by personal hostility towards one so worthy of their approval. Gloucester advanced to meet her at the head of five hundred feudal dependants, sumptuously apparelled, and the chief nobility of the realm vied with each other in displaying tokens of their respect: the liveries of their retainers shone with beaten gold to do her honour, and with delicate gallantry they avowed themselves her partizans by adopting the beautiful badge which was the symbol of her name. The daisy, called in France marguerite, bloomed in the plumed and jewelled crests of England's chivalry; and thus surrounded by gems and flowers the fair queen was conducted in triumph to her coronation. On passing through the city to Westminster Margaret was greeted by a succession of pageants, the picturesque and costly exhibitions which the genius of the age constructed upon seasons of rejoicing, angels and goddesses, the ancient worthies, and personifications of the cardinal virtues fantastically arrayed, and issuing out of mimic woods or pasteboard temples, pronounced orations in her praise and scattered garlands in her path; her charms were extolled in the strains of England's most distinguished poet Lydgate, and a splendid tournament was held for the space of

three days to evince the national felicity at the arrival of the fair and royal visitant. Upon this occasion also the Earls of Buckingham and Warwick were advanced to the dignity of dukes, and those of Suffolk and Dorset received the title of marquis. But the joy which welcomed the ill-fated guest was of short duration: she had brought no dower, and the country soon experienced the inconvenience which the lavish expenditure of public money upon her account had occasioned. Henry's administration had never been celebrated for its financial skill: so early as 1433 the treasurer announced the unwelcome intelligence that the revenues of the crown were inadequate to its disbursements by thirty-five thousand pounds a-year; and the debt continued to increase, bringing with it the usual consequences, embarrassed measures and popular dissatisfaction. CHAP. XIII. 1444.

The contrast of the queen's disposition with that of her meek husband was unfavourable. Female interposition in state affairs is usually resented, and many of the king's friends * perceiving themselves excluded from all share in the government by a

* This marriage semed to many bothe infortunate and vnprofitable to the realme of England, and that for many causes: fyrst, the kyng with her had not one peny and for the fetchyng of her the Marques Suffolke demaunded a whole fiftene in open parliament: also for her mariage the Duchie of Anjow, the citie of Manns, and the whole countie of Meyne, were delivered and released to Kyng Reyner her father, whiche counties were the very stages and backestandes to the Duchy of Normandy: furthermore for this mariage the Erle of Arminiacke toke suche great displeasure, that he became vtter enemy to the realme of England, and was the chief cause that the Englishmen wer expulsed out of the whole Duchie of Aquiteyne, and lost bothe the countreis of Gascoyn and Guyen. But moste of all it should seme, that God with this matrimony was not content. For after this spousage the kyng's friends fell from him, bothe in England and in France.—*Hall.*

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domineering woman, determined to uphold her own favourites, withdrew their support from the throne. She gave no hope of endearing herself to the nation as the mother of its future sovereigns: her marriage was as yet childless, and the frail tenure of human existence rendered the heirs presumptive objects of peculiar importance. The Duke of Gloucester stood next to his nephew; and if the anticipation of his succession to the crown should have induced him to resent the insignificance to which he had been reduced by an overbearing faction, it would not be difficult to account for the persecution which ensued. We read of continual subjects of offence occurring between him and the prime minister Suffolk; but the particulars of their differences have not been handed down to us; it is therefore very difficult for the historian to judge, whether Gloucester's indignation transported him into any unjustifiable action, or if Suffolk, bold in crime, resolved to rid himself of an opponent whom he feared and hated. The old chroniclers do not hesitate to attribute Gloucester's death to the malevolent practices of the queen and Suffolk, aided by the Duke of Buckingham and the two cardinals Winchester and York,* but the absence of positive proof of the existence of such a conspiracy renders their guilt a matter of conjecture only.

The king easily led to imbibe the opinions of [illegible] councillors, was persuaded that his uncle ente[illegible] evil designs against him. At the suggestion of th[illegible] nistry he summoned a parliament at Bury, in[illegible] the usual place of meeting in Westminster. Notwith[illegible]

1447.

* Hall.

standing the inclemency of the season patroles were directed to scour the roads all night, the country people were required to attend in arms,* and such extraordinary measures of security were taken as evinced a strong dread of danger. Gloucester who had for some time resided at his castle of Devizes, not apprehending any violence to himself, repaired to the appointed spot to take his place as a peer, accompanied by a very small retinue, his train consisting only of two and thirty persons, a number which in all probability would have been swelled to hundreds, had he anticipated the intentions of his enemies.

The assembly opened with the usual form, and the first day passed in tranquillity; on the second morning, Lord Beaumont, Constable of England, as charged with the arrest of the Duke of Glou- ster upon an accusation of treason; his attendants the same time were hurried to different prisons,† d rumours were industriously circulated that he editated an attempt upon the king's life, for the rpose of procuring the liberation of his duchess. larvellous tales usually gain credit with the vulgar, nd before the alarm occasioned by this strange lligence had subsided, or preparations could be le for the trial of the illustrious prisoner, he was nd dead in his bed. Apoplexy, brought on by ress of mind, was the alleged cause, and the s exhibited to public view to shew that it mark of violence, but this precaution did atisfy the nation that foul play had not been

* Stow. † Fabian

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committed,* and secret murmurs soon broke into open accusation.*

The manifestation of Gloucester's innocence, had he been permitted to defend himself, would have been very dangerous to his enemies. The disgrace of his arrest could not have been forgiven, and fear of the consequences of so hazardous a step might have operated to produce his murder. Sudden death under such suspicious circumstances, must always excite distrust, and Suffolk in neglecting to bring forward such evidence to the world as would have proved that the duke in expiring by the course of nature had been rescued from the penalty of treason, has rendered himself liable to the imputation of having destroyed a prince by assassination whom he dared not bring to public trial. Five persons in the service of the duke were condemned as participators in his pretended conspiracy to be hanged, drawn and quartered. Suffolk proceeded to the place of execution and making a parade of mercy which he vainly hoped would have procured for him more lasting applause than the cheers of the surrounding spectators, suspended the punishment at the moment that the hangman having performed the first part of his office had marked the bodies of the sufferers for the barbarous accomplishment of the sentence. They were cut down still alive, and received the gracious

* Some judged him to be strangled: others write that he was stifled smouldered between twoo fether beddes. After whose deathe nine of servants (although they were arraigned and attainted) wer put to deat for the Marques of Suffolk, when they should have been executed, sent openly their pardon, but this doing appeased not the grudge of the peop which saied that the pardonne of the servantes was no amendes for murd ing of their master.—*Hall.*

news of pardon from the lips of the man who had allowed them to languish in torture until the last moment that human nature could have supported its infliction.*

A considerable part of Gloucester's great possessions was granted to the family of his enemy, and the appalling instances which Henry's reign affords of cruel deeds incited by a thirst for gold, in men whose vast possessions rendered such craving avarice in the highest degree disgraceful, seems to justify the suspicion that Suffolk had been tempted by the riches of his adversary to pursue him to the grave. This ill-fated prince, who has been styled the Mæcenas of his age, has left behind him lasting memorials of his patronage of the learned. He is supposed to have been the founder of the Bodleian library, and his encouragement of literature invited erudite foreigners to enter his service; whilst he won the hearts of the unlettered by the splendour of his household and the munificence of his hospitality. The vice of intemperance which has been too justly laid to his charge, and the indulgence of self-will when the public interest demanded the sacrifice of private feeling, are faults which were eclipsed by those splendid virtues which secured the affection of his contemporaries and the esteem of posterity. We cannot withhold our reverence from one graced by the excellence of his heart with the title of "the good," and called, for his undeviating justice, "the father of his country."

* When these unfortunate men received their pardon they were turned out destitute upon the world, for we are told that the "yeomen of the crown had their livelihood, and the executioner their clothes."—*Stow.*

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In the short period of six weeks after the death of Gloucester, his implacable and triumphant political rival Cardinal Beaufort descended, with a very different reputation to the tomb. A haughty, ambitious priest, determined upon bearing sway, and little scrupulous in the means of adding to his revenues, yet liberally appropriating his riches to the service of his sovereign, he seems scarcely to have merited the obloquy which a host of writers have heaped upon his name. The proud persecuting spirit of the churchman, and his never ceasing enmity to the popular idol Gloucester, irritated the public mind so strongly against him that the odium attached to his imputed crimes, at all times of frightful magnitude, in the Protestant days of Shakspeare sanctioned the poet's terrible delineation of a death-bed tortured with remorse: a soul hardened and hopeless, a guilty despairing wretch, who died "and made no sign." Pious according to the corrupt notions of his church Cardinal Beaufort appears by the evidence of his chaplain to have been more tormented by the fading away of his earthly grandeur than anxious respecting his condition in another world.* That he employed his power in the furtherance of personal aggrandizement rather than for the welfare of the king he served, and the country whose interests were committed to his care, is an imputation which he must share with the statesmen of preceding and subsequent times. The errors of Beaufort's administration produced very disastrous consequences; but they were the errors of the age, and we find

* Hall.

his successors acting upon the same principles and bringing forth the same results. CHAP. XIII.

Though reaching what is usually termed a good old age, death overtook Cardinal Beaufort before he was prepared to relinquish the ambitious hope of attaining new honours and dignities: his aspirations after worldly grandeur were intense; even at a period when men usually perceive the vanity of human wishes; he cherished expectations of ascending unrivalled to the height of power, and could scarcely believe that the immense wealth which he had accumulated should be insufficient to preserve him from the common doom: betraying his thoughts to the attendants of his dying couch, he was heard to exclaim "Why should I die having so much riches? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fye, will not death be hindered? nor will money do nothing?"* Having exhausted these vain lamentations, the haughty prelate deplored the demolition of those brilliant prospects which had flattered him with the hope of engrossing the whole authority in the English cabinet and of rising to the highest dignities of papal power. "When my nephew of Bedford dyed I thought myself half up the wheel, but when I saw my other nephew of Gloucester deceased, then I thought myself able to be equal with kings, and so thought to increase my treasure in hope to have worne a triple crown. But I see now the world faileth me, and so I am deceived. I pray you all to pray for me." The last testament of the cardinal is couched in a strain of pious submission to the will

* Hall.

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of heaven, too much at variance with his conduct through life, and the sentiments avowed almost at the moment of dissolution, to be considered more than common-place words, inserted in accordance with custom. The legacies he devoted to charitable purposes were magnificent, and he manifested his regard to Queen Margaret by bequeathing to her the bed of cloth of Damascus, and the arras belonging to the chamber in which she had slept at Waltham.

CHAPTER XIV.

State of public Feeling towards the Duke of York—Policy of Suffolk and the Queen—Rivalry between York and Somerset—Death of the latter—York's Hatred to the new Duke—his Appointment in Ireland—Suffolk's Administration—Jealousy of the Nobles—State of France—Public Discontent—Accusations of Suffolk's Enemies—Murder of the Bishop of Chichester—his alleged Declaration—Suffolk's Vindication—Increasing Clamour against him—his Impeachment by the Commons—his Defence—Sentence of Banishment—Sanguinary Attempt of Suffolk's Enemies—Continuation of evil Reports—Suffolk's Letter to his Son—he puts to Sea—his Detention—his Despair—the Sailors sit in Judgment—Suffolk's Condemnation—his Execution—Supposition concerning Suffolk's Death—Cruel Joy of the Populace—State of Affairs on the Continent—Conduct of Somerset—Talbot's Exploit—Fall of Rouen—Kyril's Expedition—Defeat of the English—its Consequence—Caen besieged—Somerset's Weakness—Remonstrance of Sir David Hall—Fall of Normandy—Attack upon Guienne—Loss of the Duchy—Henry's Imbecility—Character of Queen Margaret—Embarrassments of the Crown—Conduct of the Clergy—Fierce Spirit of the Nation—Claim of the House of York—Revolt of the Commons in Kent—Demands of Cade—Defeat of the Staffords—Opinion of the Council—Dispersion of the Royal Army—Cade marches to London—his Entrance—Murder of Baylley—Illegal Execution—Spirited Conduct of the Citizens—Cade's Defeat—Dispersion of the Rebels—Cade's second Attempt—his Flight and Death.

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DURING the contentions which ended so fatally in Gloucester's death, the Duke of York had been honourably employed at a safe distance from the

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scene of the struggles of his contemporaries: thus he escaped an early involvement in state intrigue; and peculiarly favoured by fortune he was appointed to serve in France before the commencement of those final disasters which expelled the English from the land they had so nearly conquered. The duke's good conduct procured him universal esteem; and now that the legitimate presumptive heir of the House of Lancaster was laid in the grave, the grandeur and the authority of Cardinal Beaufort sunk into the same obscurity, and the line only feebly supported by the Somersets, a weak branch abased by the disgrace of their birth in the eye of the law, there were many who turned their regards towards Richard Plantagenet the lineal descendant of Edward III. Suffolk and the queen, when too late, appear to have been aware of the dangerous relation in which the Duke of York stood to the crown by the demise of Gloucester; and with the rashness which marked their administration, in a vain attempt to depress him they gave him speedy cause of discontent by obliging him to relinquish his splendid
1447. post in Normandy in favour of John Duke of Somerset. This invidious preference provoked the indignation of York. His hatred was at first directed against the Somersets and afterwards transferred to the party who upheld them. John Beaufort, a man of haughty temper and mean abilities, speedily lost the courtly favour which had enabled him to triumph over his rival; and too proud to brook even the appearance of disgrace, committed suicide. He died in the course of the following year, leaving one child, a daughter, committed to the wardship of

Suffolk. His brother Edmund Beaufort succeeded to all his dignities, and incurred the inextinguishable animosity of Richard Plantagenet by the base surrender of a town which belonged to him in Normandy. CHAP. XIV.

The command in Ireland, which in some degree seemed to be attached to his family, was given to the Duke of York; apparently a poor exchange, yet in the sequel exceedingly advantageous, since he was spared the odium which the loss of France occasioned to the new regent; a loss which, though perhaps accelerated and rendered disgraceful by the incapacity of Somerset, was under the present administration almost inevitable.

Suffolk, now raised to a dukedom, swayed the whole kingdom; but exalted to the height of power, every day revealed some new peril, and he looked down from his dizzy height upon a sea of danger, wherein each succeeding wave threatened to undermine the narrow base of that lofty superstructure which he had so fearlessly raised.

The king's immediate friends observed Suffolk's ascendance over the monarch's weak mind with disgust: as proud and rapacious as himself, neither Buckingham, Exeter or Norfolk could brook the exclusive privileges which he had obtained. Suffolk was no longer upheld by the power of the cardinal: he had courted and secured only one friend, the queen, and she though so resolute and high spirited could not save him from his numerous enemies. He neglected to provide for the security of the English possessions in France. Somerset described in 1449.
vivid terms the dangerous situation of the provinces

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from the dearth of adequate means of defence; and strongly urged the government to provide him with the necessary supplies of men, ammunition and money; but his remonstrance was unheeded, and the country left to its own impoverished resources was soon the spoil of France.*

The cession of Anjou and Maine, which led directly to the seizure of Normandy by Charles VII. who had politically evaded a peace in order that he might either commence hostilities or renew the truce according to the situation of the English, exasperated the minds of the people against the author of this calamity; numbers were farther incensed by his tyrannical disposal of offices both lay and ecclesiastical;† and the greedy avarice which he and his dependants evinced alienated all those who were the victims of his extortion; at least these are the accusations recorded by the monkish historians of Suffolk's time. His crimes were probably exaggerated, but whether the heavy allegations brought against him were true or false, the effect is certain, the whole nation seemed to be animated by a spirit of determined hostility, and the animosity so openly displayed warned him to take speedy measures to shield himself from the gathering storm. Anticipating the impeachment which ensued, the duke solicited and obtained leave to vindicate himself from the aspersions of his adversaries. The violence of Suffolk's enemies, whilst it overwhelmed him, at the same time furnished the means of a much more ample vindication than he could have made had he been charged with those offences only which he had

* Parliament Rolls, 147, 143. † History of Croyl, 521.

actually committed. Accused of having wilfully betrayed the interests of his country to the French king, exposed its secret councils, and bargained away its possessions,—with a design to dethrone Henry VI. and to place the crown upon the head of his son whom he intended to marry to his ward Margaret Beaufort, it was not difficult to parry such wild imputations.*

The Bishop of Chichester, who had performed the odious office of delivering up Maine into the hands of the enemy, had been sacrificed to the popular indignation in a tumultuous insurrection in Hampshire. It was said that with his dying breath he had declared Suffolk to be a traitor, who had sold the province to Charles VII. The assertion if really made was probably only wrung from the bishop by the exigence of the moment, in the vain hope of arresting the fury of his assailants by denouncing a more guilty person; or it might have been one of the numerous inventions which never fail to spring out of the clamours of the multitude. Suffolk calmly repelled these malevolent slanders: he addressed himself to the king in parliament, and entreated him to remember the faithful services which he and his family had performed for the English crown, the death of his father at Harfleur, that of his elder brother on the field of Azincourt, of two others killed at Jargeau, and of the youngest who had died a hostage for him in France. Speaking of himself he said that he had borne arms for thirty-four years, and worn the order of the garter for thirty; that he had continued in the wars for the

1450.

* Parliament Rolls.

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space of seventeen years without once visiting his own country, and had served the crown for fifteen years since his return. He affirmed that his best interests lay in England, since it was the place of his birth, of his inheritance, and that of his children; and concluded by appealing to the king, whether it were possible that all these things considered he should become a traitor for a Frenchman's promise.*

Suffolk's defence satisfied no one except the king and queen, and their undiminished favour could not protect him from the hatred of a whole nation determined to effect his ruin. The commons requested that he might be sent to the Tower to answer charges which he himself had confessed had been alleged against him. The lords replied that they had no power to command the imprisonment of a peer unless he should be distinctly accused of some particularized offence; and two days afterwards the commons impeached him of treason, on an absurd declaration that he had "stuffed his castle at Wallingford with gunnes, and other implements of war," for the purpose of affording assistance to the French king in an intended invasion. A long catalogue of charges followed, embodying the substance of every report which had been circulated to Suffolk's prejudice: many of these were evidently malicious, and all overstrained. His weak and rash measures had incurred a fearful responsibility, and though guiltless of the corrupt motives ascribed to him, and unstained by foreign gold, he had invariably disregarded the public good when the

Jan. 26. 1450.

* Parliament Rolls, v. p. 176.

schemes of his selfish ambition demanded the sacrifice. CHAP. XIV.

When called upon for his answer the duke denied that he had acted without the concurrence of the council and the sanction of the king and parliament in his negociations with France; he ridiculed the idea of considering the Lady Margaret as heiress to the crown, and entreated several lords who were present, to remember that they were acquainted with his intention of uniting his son to the daughter of the Earl of Warwick, had she lived to fulfil the engagement; for the rest of the allegations he affirmed that they were utterly false and untrue.* Mar. 13. 1450.

Upheld by the king and queen and only secretly opposed by the nobles, Margaret hoped that by consenting to the favourite's banishment, the storm would blow over, and he might return again to the station he was obliged to quit. The infuriated state of public feeling, excited by inflammatory libels, and breaking out in continual insurrections, warned her of the necessity of appearing at least to acquiesce in the minister's disgrace. Suffolk in consequence was brought before the king who had assembled all the nobles then in London, in an inner chamber of the palace. Kneeling down, he answered to the chancellor (who remarked that he had not demanded to be put on his trial), that he trusted he had sufficiently cleared himself from charges which he had shewn to be false, and therefore threw himself unhesitatingly upon the decision of his sovereign.† The chancellor was instructed to reply, that since he had not claimed to be tried by his peers, but had sub- Mar. 17. 1450.

* Parliament Rolls. † Parliament Rolls.

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mitted entirely to the royal judgment, the king would neither hold him guilty or innocent, but of his own free will, commanded him to be absent from the realm for the space of five years.

Suffolk was not permitted to escape with so lenient a sentence; the rancour of his enemies was unappeasable. On the night of his leaving London two thousand persons assembled in St. Giles's with the determination to intercept him on his journey; they found his horse saddled and his servant waiting, and disappointed of their promised victim, treated both with great inhumanity.* Baffled by the duke's caution who quitted London by another road and reached Suffolk in safety, the revenge of Suffolk's enemies was only delayed. A single month of retirement cruelly disturbed by the untiring persecution of malicious tongues was allowed to the unhappy favourite, and deeply touched by the aspersions cast upon his honour he assembled the neighbouring knights and gentlemen together, and solemnly swore upon the sacrament in their presence that he was innocent of the crimes imputed to him, and guiltless of the sale of Normandy.

Mar. 18. 1450.

April 30. 1450.

A letter† addressed at this period by Suffolk to his

* William of Wyrcester.

† This letter is preserved in Fenn's collection, vol. 1, page 32.

"My dear and only well-beloved son, I beseech our Lord in Heaven the Maker of all the world, to bless you, and to send you ever grace to love him, and to dread him; to the which, as a father may charge his child, I both charge you, and pray you to set all your spirits and wits to do, and to know his holy laws and commandments, by the which ye shall, with his great mercy, pass all the great tempests and troubles of this wretched world. And that also wittingly, ye do nothing for love nor dread of any earthly creature that should displease him. And there as [whenever] any frailty maketh

only son, contains such admirable councils and so many exhortations to persevere in the most religious

you to fall, beseech his mercy soon to call you to him again, with repentance, satisfaction, and contrition of your heart never more in will to offend him.

"Secondly:—Next Him above all earthly things, to be true liegeman in heart, in will, in thought, in deed, unto the king our alder most [greatest] high and dread sovereign lord, to whom both ye and I be so much bound to; charging you as father can and may, rather to die than to be the contrary, or to know anything that were against the welfare or prosperity of his most royal person, but that as far as your body and life may stretch, ye live and die to defend it, and to let his highness have knowledge thereof in all the haste ye can.

"Thirdly:—In the same wise I charge you, my dear son, alway as ye be bounden by the commandment of God to do, to love, to worship, your lady and mother; and also that ye obey alway her commandments, and to believe her counsels and advices in all your works, the which dread not but shall be, best and truest to you. And if any body should steer you to the contrary, to flee the counsel in any wise, for ye shall find it nought and evil.

"Furthermore, as Father may and can, I charge you in any wise to flee the company and counsel of proud men, of covetous men, and of flattering men, the more especially and mightily to withstand them, and not to draw nor to meddle with them, with all your might and power, and to draw to you and to your company good and virtuous men, and such as be of good conversation, and of truth, and by them shall ye never be deceived or repent you of.

"Moreover, never follow your own wit in no wise, but in all your works, of such folks as I write of above, ask your advice and counsel, and doing thus, with the mercy of God, ye shall do right well, and live in right much worship, and great heart's rest and ease.

"And I will be to you as good lord and father as my heart can think.

"And last of all, as heartily and as lovingly as ever father blessed his child in earth, I give you the blessing of our Lord and of me, which of His infinite mercy increase you in all virtue and good living; and that your blood may by his grace from kindred to kindred multiply in this earth to his service, in such wise as after the departing from this wretched world here, ye and they may glorify him eternally amongst his angels in heaven.

"Written of mine own hand,

"The day of my departing from this land,

"Your true and loving Father,

"SUFFOLK."

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observance of his duty towards God and man, that we can scarcely fail to be impressed with sentiments of pity for the writer, so peculiarly unfortunate, if his political conduct had been actuated by the principles which he inculcated for the guidance of others. Suffolk's errors might have been those of judgment alone, or with the clearest perceptions of right it is not always that men have sufficient resolution to persevere in well-doing when assailed by strong temptation: but however unwilling to adopt the vulgar opinion or to condemn without sufficient proof, it is impossible to exonerate the Duke of Suffolk from the charge of having betrayed his country, not certainly to the palpable bribes of the enemy, but to his own insatiate ambition. When a private individual voluntarily emerges from a quiet station incapacity becomes a crime. The duke did not possess that over-mastering spirit which commands success; gifted with courage that was never disputed, no single action of his life in the cabinet or the field ever covered him with glory; and in his negociation with France, and his administration at home, every evil which befel the English cause, unluckily if undesignedly, was accompanied by some personal advantage to himself; and therefore, the most candid reader may be pardoned, if considering the result of Suffolk's measures, and imputing to the measures themselves the least unfavourable motives, they pronounce the duke to have been a weak, rash man, unable to guide the vessel which he presumed to steer, and ready to hazard its destruction rather than relinquish his command.

The hostility which compelled Suffolk to leave

England might have warned the exile of the necessity of taking infinite precaution to ensure his safety, but his preparations appear to have been open, and he sailed from Ipswich in the first week in May with a convoy of three ships. On arriving off Dover the duke dispatched a small vessel to Calais for the purpose of gaining intelligence respecting the feeling of the inhabitants towards him; it was intercepted by a large ship called the Nicholas of the Tower, and the commander being aware of the duke's approach, made sail, and coming up with his vessel sent out a boat with orders that he should repair on board. Suffolk unwarily complied, attended by a few followers he ascended the hostile deck, his first salutation was ominous. "Welcome, traitor," exclaimed the captain, and immediately abandoned by the hireling crew of his own ship, he was left to the mercy of rude and sanguinary men. The nature of the duke's reception left little doubt of the fate which was to ensue, yet the horror of the catastrophe was heightened by a superstitious conviction which shut out hope. It has been said that the witch of Eye had bade him beware of water, and the name of the commander of the vessel, Walter, corrupted by a mal-pronunciation into the same sound, inspired him with terror which was deepened when he learned the designation of the ship itself. The duke had been told that if he escaped the dangers of the Tower he should be safe, and in quitting the gloomy confines of the fortress in London he trusted that his life would be secure; but his courage failed him when he met the ill-omened namesake of that fatal prison on the deep. A fearful in-

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terval of two days ensued from the period of Suffolk's capture, in which he underwent the form of a trial by the sailors, having previously confessed himself to his chaplain.* The duke's judges agreed in finding him guilty, and continuing inexorable to his promises of reward and entreaties for mercy drew him into a boat by the side of the ship. One of the meanest of the crew desired him to lay his head down, saying that "he should be fairly dealt with, and die on a sword." After a few eager yet vain solicitations that they would spare his life, he complied; a rusty weapon was produced, which at five strokes severed his head from his body: the executioners then stripped the corpse of its russet gown and doublet of mailed velvet, and bringing it on shore laid it naked on the sands "with the head (as some say) upon a pole beside it;" the duke's property was likewise deposited with his slaughtered remains, and his attendants were landed unhurt. These things performed, the Nicholas sailed away. The murder was committed within sight of Suffolk's ships, whose crews remained quiet spectators of the inhuman deed.† The tidings of this tragical event travelled

* Fenn's Collection, p. 38, 42, vol. 1.

† There is not a more unfortunate family in the records of the Baronage than that of De La Pole; their origin has been already related, and for many years the stigma attached to the low birth of their progenitors exposed them to the persecution of an insolent nobility. Michael, the son of William de La Pole, whom Edward III. styled his "beloved merchant," died in the reign of Richard II. in exile, flying from his enemies to Calais in so abject a disguise that his own brother could not recognize him. Another earl, as recounted by the ill-fated favourite of Henry VI. perished at Harfleur, a third upon the field of Azincourt. The marriage of the son of the murdered nobleman whose melancholy fate occurs in the present page, with a sister of Edward IV. subjected the luckless race to new evils. In former years the

swiftly, and the sheriff of Kent proceeded immediately to the spot and sate watching the body until he received the king's commands respecting its disposal, it was afterwards interred with befitting honours in the collegiate church of Wingfield in Suffolk.*

The grief of Henry and his queen was extreme when they learned the fatal catastrophe which had befallen their beloved friend, yet we do not hear that the perpetrators of such atrocious violence were ever punished; they were perhaps under powerful protection. William of Wyrcestre and the Monk of Croyland, in relating the circumstance of Suffolk's detention at sea, assert that it was premeditated, and other writers impute the design to those Lords who were politically opposed to him; Monstrelet even naming the Duke of Somerset as the most deeply implicated in the plot. Executions however, equally illegal, were of frequent occurrence in these lawless times, wherein the commons required little pretext to seize the sword of justice and to dispense summary punishment upon those who had incurred public indignation; the Duke of Suffolk's death might therefore have been caused by an accidental rencontre with a ferocious band, incensed

meanness of their descent had been alleged against them: this illustrious connection occasioned a more bitter source of enmity. The Tudors beheld the near relatives of the house of York with fatal jealousy; throughout the reign of Henry VII. and that of his successor, their blood flowed in torrents, those who escaped the sword and the axe only finding safety in distant countries. Cardinal De La Pole the last of the name, was recalled to England by Mary, and dying a short time before the accession of Elizabeth, the family became extinct.

* Fenn's Collection.

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but not suborned against him. With the exception of his own retainers the duke did not possess amid the lower classes a single friend; popular hatred so far from being appeased by the barbarous revenge which had overtaken him in his flight, burst out into indecent songs of triumph.*[c] Those who could thus brutally exult over his blood-stained grave, would not have hesitated in dealing the stroke of death; and it must consequently always remain a matter of doubt whether he was the victim of a deep laid conspiracy or a sacrifice to the fury of men not previously intending his destruction. The assassination excited comparatively little horror, it was considered to be a well-merited retribution for the murder of Gloucester; and never did any minister fall with deeper odium attached to his name, or fewer lamentations for a fate so cruel and untimely.

The signal vengeance which had been taken on the Duke of Suffolk did not appease the exasperated spirit of the nation. Accustomed to conquest, the English could not brook the loss of France, and the hatred which had pursued the royal favourite to the grave was after his death directed to his successor Somerset, under whose command Henry's foreign dominions had melted away, and who now pursued the same measures which had already covered the crown with disgrace.

The late misfortunes in France owed their direct origin to the cession of Maine, but the most disastrous consequences of Margaret's marriage treaty were attributed to the incapacity and the cowardice of Somerset. When the English soldiers evacuated

* Vesp. B. 16.

the provinces which Suffolk had agreed to relinquish to France they were suffered to overrun the neighbouring countries unprovided with quarters and depending upon their own swords for subsistence; a punishment it is said most unwisely devised by the king's lieutenant for their obstinate tenacity in refusing to be expelled from their garrisons except by force.

With weapons in their hands and indignation in their hearts they were not long in seeking a remedy. They violated the truce by seizing upon the town of Fougeres, and pillaging the inhabitants. The Duke of Bretagne complained of this outrage to his feudal sovereign, and Somerset hastened to assure the French king that he was guiltless of all participation in the predatory mode of warfare adopted by the troops under Sir Francis Surienne; but he did not restore the town, and Charles politicly estimating the damage at a sum far beyond the English power to produce, permitted his own commanders to make reprisals, which being quickly resented the war broke out afresh, but with so much disadvantage on the English part that Somerset found himself shut up in his capital and exposed daily to attacks which he was unable to resist. No succours arrived from England, the city was surrounded by foes, and a dangerous conspiracy existed within the walls. 1449.

The inhabitants of Rouen favoured Charles, and secretly assured Dunois, the bastard of Orleans, that they would open their gates to his forces.* Once the gallant Talbot saved the city by his promp-

* Hall.

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titude and valour; perceiving that the French had gained a rampart which had been entrusted to the townsmen's charge, he flung himself upon the spot, hurled the foremost assailants in the ditch below; and having repelled the open foe put the treacherous sentinels to the sword.* But Talbot's exertions backed only by a garrison of twelve hundred men were insufficient to maintain a place which had fallen from its allegiance to England. Somerset encompassed in the streets by an overpowering number of armed citizens, was compelled to allow them to treat with the enemy, they brought him conditions which he rejected, and withdrawing to the citadel he sustained a close siege by the French and Normans, who were now united. Obliged to capitulate the enemy refused to grant those terms which they had formerly offered, and exacted the surrender of several important fortresses, and the payment of fifty-six thousand francs for his ransom. Somerset had no alternative, he submitted, leaving the brave Talbot and other knights as hostages for the fulfilment of his promise.

The duke's example damped the ardour of the English: it was sufficient for the enemy to shew his troops before the towns and castles; not one was resolutely defended, and many fell without a blow. Somerset retreated ingloriously to Caen, which was immediately threatened by the French. In this exigence the English government sent a scanty force of three thousand men under Sir Thomas Kyriel, to prevent the siege, but they were encountered by the Earl of Clermont near Fourmigni

* Monstrelet.

ere they could reach their destination.* The contest lasted with doubtful success for three hours. It was decided by the appearance of the constable of France with a formidable reinforcement: many of the English turned and fled; the rest fought stoutly to the last, and were either left dead upon the field or taken prisoners.† The fruits of this victory were Avranches, Bayeux and Valanges, which opened their gates; and the news was received throughout the whole realm of France with acclamations of joy; for the troops of Charles had seldom been successful in the open field. The conquerors followed up their advantage by the investiture of Caen: their attempts were weakly resisted; and its reduction, by many attributed to a principle more reprehensible if less base than cowardice, increased the bitter enmity which already subsisted between the Dukes of Somerset and York. Caen had been granted to the latter by the king; and when his political rival had superseded him in the command in France, he had left it in the charge of three knights, Sir David Hall, Sir Robert Vere and Sir Henry Radford, who were entrusted respectively with the town, the castle and the keep. The besieged made several vigorous sorties; and Somerset, it is said, careless of a place which belonged to one with whom he was at variance, allowed the inhabitants to treat with a foe whom he might have effectually repulsed. Totally unprepared for a spirited resistance, the duke had even neglected to send away his wife and family; and considerations for their safety were permitted to interpose between his inclination and

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June 5. 1450.

* Hall. † Monstrelet.

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his duty; the terrors of infantile and feminine weakness were communicated to him, or at least he had not firmness to withstand their tears and entreaties. A stone discharged from the heavy ordnance which Charles had provided for the siege, fell near enough to endanger the lives of the duchess and her children; and the agonies of these helpless beings so wrought upon his soul that, forgetful of the claims of his country, he surrendered. This craven conduct provoked the indignation of Sir David Hall, who considering himself accountable for the loss of a town committed to his governance, refused to sanction a treaty disgraceful to the English arms; and after vain a endeavour to inspire the duke with more honourable sentiments, quitted the place for Cherburgh, from whence he sailed to Ireland with the ungracious tidings. Cherburgh was soon afterwards the spoil of the conqueror, and not a single castle of Normandy remained to the descendant of him whose proud banner had floated triumphantly over its hundred fortresses.

Aug. 12. 1450.

Charles VII. now turned his victorious arms against Guienne. The inhabitants, faithful to their ancient sovereigns, were ready to assist in its defence had they met with encouragement and support from England. Henry and his ministry looked passively on whilst the enemy pursued his rapid conquests, and the dutchy was relinquished without a struggle,* for unable to cope singly with the troops which the French monarch poured down upon them, each town and castle surrendered when a superior force appeared before the walls. In this campaign Charles recovered the whole of his kingdom with the excep-

1451.

* Hall.

tion of Calais. England had lost its possessions and its honour, the tame resignation of four rich and fertile provinces stamped the government with indelible disgrace, and the meanest peasant in the land blushed with shame and indignation at the tarnished lustre of the warrior's arms.

A dreadful crisis was at hand in Henry's most inglorious and unhappy reign, the aspect of the times was full of horror; the king himself, a mere cipher, whose amiable qualities might have atoned for his weakness had he been united to a partner equally inoffensive, was under the dominion of a proud and headstrong woman. The very virtues and talents of Margaret were so many misfortunes to her husband; guided solely by her own feelings, and strongly attached to the party who had raised her to the throne, she espoused their cause and their interests to the prejudice of the national welfare, with an inveterate obstinacy which involved her in the ruin brought on by their unwise and arbitrary conduct. A meeker disposition, a more yielding temper, would have saved the house of Lancaster from the persecution which laid it in the dust. Had the queen allowed the administration to be guided by men who possessed the confidence of the people, the generous spirit of the nation would have interposed to counteract the ambition of a rival, she would not have incurred public hatred but have shared in the love and pity accorded to her husband, whose harmless character excited the veneration of a large portion of his subjects: but jealous of the slightest interference and hostile to every species of reform she boldly struggled with the opposite party, and de-

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fended the measures of an unpopular administration with an heroic constancy worthy of a better cause.

It must be owned that Margaret was placed in a situation of infinite trial and difficulty; too courageous to submit against her inclination and her judgment, she plunged into an unequal warfare between a divided nobility, at a period when every class of society was ripe and ready for revolt. The country groaned under an accumulation of evils, the continuation of a wretched system of policy in church and state had wrought mischief which it was now scarcely possible to remedy. The crown revenues were so impoverished by repeated grants to greedy favourites, that Henry had been obliged to pawn the silver plate out of his jewel office, and to encourage the pursuits of alchemists in the fallacious hope of transmuting base metal into the gold of which he stood so much in need.* The conduct of the ministers of religion was a fertile source of disorder. Many pleaded the sanctity of their habit as an exemption from punishment for the most atrocious crimes. The heads of the church, instead of reforming the priesthood, clamoured for the pardon of those who had been prosecuted for rape, felony, and extortion;† and whilst the faggot and the brand were kindled for all who dared to search the scriptures for the doctrine of salvation, no license however gross was disallowed to ecclesiastics who clung to the old superstition. Intent upon the extirpation of heresy, and trusting wholly to coercive means, the clergy followed their schemes of pleasure or of ambition, neglected the duties of their holy office, and

† Rymer Fœd. Gaso. MS.

treated the remonstrances of the advocates of a more strict discipline with contempt. The sermons of a few honest preachers who lashed the vices of the age, exposed the corruptions of the church to the people, and incited them to punish offences which its ministers disdained to reform: men murmured at the riches and the power of a community whom they had ceased to respect, and meditated on the means of reducing both. Loud complaints were also made of the abuse of the rights of election in the appointment of members to serve in Parliament who had not been chosen by the people. The agitated state of public feeling had shown itself in many places in tumults and insurrections; during the whole of the proceedings against the Duke of Suffolk, the rabble had created serious disturbances, arming themselves under captains who assumed various grotesque appellations.

Civilization had not yet subdued the savage propensities of the human race; a brutal thirst for blood incited the lower orders to continual massacres; the records of London are sufficient to shew the slight pretexts which were wanting to engage the inhabitants in the most dreadful outrages; an accidental dispute between two individuals would bring out a horde of barbarians from the neighbouring lanes and alleys, who either engaged fiercely with each other or united to hunt down the Jews, the Flemings, or the Lombards, whose superior industry, and consequently superior wealth, excited their hatred or their envy. Stow tells us of affrays of this nature which lasted for three days together, and the spirit was not confined to the metropolis. The murder of

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the Bishop of Chichester has been already mentioned, another prelate was butchered with equal inhumanity by his own tenants; and we can scarcely look into the old chronicles without meeting with instances of similar violence.

The sedition of the commons under the notorious Jack Cade, has generally been attributed to the machinations of the Duke of York, but we do not find any evidence to connect him or the peers who were his partizans with this revolt.

The claims of the house of Mortimer to the throne of England had never been entirely forgotten. Richard Earl of Cambridge lost his life for an alleged attempt to wrest the crown from an usurper's head, and in the early part of the present monarch's reign Sir John Mortimer, a cousin of the Earl of March, was beheaded upon a similar charge. The accusation was supposed to be malicious, and from the death of this gentleman, Hall informs us, "no small slander arose amongst the common people." Whether innocent or guilty his execution kept up the remembrance of his kinsman's rights.

The Duke of York's conduct and fortune in France offered a brilliant contrast to the shame and obloquy which covered his successor. He was not less esteemed for the excellence of his government in Ireland; and the eyes of the disaffected were naturally turned to a man who stood so high in public opinion, and who himself had sustained injuries which might dispose him to sanction their attempt to remove the offensive ministry so pertinaciously cherished by the king.

Disgraced by losses and defeats abroad, and

goaded by exactions at home, subjected to the most cruel despotism by the church, and their liberties continually threatened and endangered by an equally arbitrary government, the whole kingdom was in a state of excitation and ferment; and whilst thus agitated a report that the king intended to inflict a signal vengeance upon the county of Kent for the share which it was supposed to have taken in furnishing the ships which surprised the Duke of Suffolk, inflamed the perturbed spirits of a district always prone to sedition to madness.

Before the king and queen had recovered from their grief for the cruel fate of Suffolk, they were alarmed by the tumultuous rising of the peasants of Kent, who flocked to Blackheath in the beginning of June under John Cade, a man of some capacity but of ruffian disposition; he had fled from the service of Sir Thomas Dacre in Sussex, to escape the consequences of a murder which he had perpetrated under circumstances of great atrocity. Subsequently serving in the French army he acquired considerable military experience; and now pretending to be the illegitimate cousin of the Duke of York, called himself by the name of Mortimer. The insurgents justified their assumption of arms by a list of fifteen grievances,* which together with the requests of their

* The commons of Kent complained that the king intended to punish the county for the murder of the Duke of Suffolk, of which they were not guilty, that he gave away the crown revenues and lived entirely by the taxation of the commons; that he refused to admit the lords of his blood to his councils, and supplied their places with men of low birth; that the purveyors of the royal household were not paid their just demands, and that bribes were taken by the king's servants of those who were accused of treason.

They likewise complained of the illegal seizure of the lands of poo

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captain they sent to the king; their demands were reasonable and the monarch might have been materially benefited had he accepted their advice: but under the influence of men who would not listen to any change of measures, though advocated by more distinguished personages, the admonitions of the rabble were of course rejected.

1450. June 17. The government levied an army of twenty thousand men in haste, and the king advanced in person to quell the disturbance. Cade, who had entrenched himself at Blackheath, with a skill and caution which proved him to be adequate to his command, being aware of the approach of the royal forces June 24. withdrew to Seven Oaks, and there took up a more favourable position. His retreat deceived Sir Humphrey Stafford into a belief that he fled in fear, and the knight and his brother pursuing the supposed fugitives at the head of a small party, the rebels faced about, received the charge with bravery, slew both the Staffords and defeated the rest.

people—of the exactions of men in office—the improper return of members not chosen by the people, but named and appointed by lords in power—the sale of the collectorships, and the vexation and trouble occasioned by their attendance at sessions from distant parts of the county, they therefore prayed that the assize might be divided for the remedy of this inconvenience.

They requested after many assurances of loyalty to the king in whose service they declared themselves to be ready to suffer death, that the relations of the Duke of Suffolk should be banished from court, and the Dukes of York, Exeter, Buckingham, and Norfolk, with the old nobility of the land, his true lords, should be employed about the king's person. They demanded the punishment of those false traitors who had devised the death of Gloucester, and by whose means the French provinces had been delivered up and lost; and finally they besought the king to abolish all extortions, to relieve the people from their present grievous oppressions, and to bring those false traitors, Slegge, Crowmer, Isle, and Robert Este, to justice.—*Stow.*

The complaints of the commons were by many lords who were now called to the king's council, adjudged to be worthy of redress, and their success in the late conflict produced a more open expression of this opinion. Several of the nobles urged the dismissal of their followers, whom they represented as unwilling to fight against men who contended not unjustly for their natural rights.* The expedience of sending Lord Say to the tower was also suggested to the king. He was an object of general detestation, and his disgrace it was affirmed would deter many from joining the standard of rebellion. Assured of at best very feeble support, and threatened with instant desertion, Henry complied: commanded the imprisonment of Lord Say, and disbanding his army, repaired to Kenilworth.

Cade arrayed himself in the golden spurs and glittering mail of the knight he had slain, and returned to his camp at Blackheath. His numbers increased daily; men of a superior condition to the generality of his associates were forced into his service, as we learn from the letters of Payn, preserved in Sir John Fenn's collection; and several mentioned in the same document, seem to have joined him of their own accord.† Payn owed his life to the intercession of a gentleman of Norfolk, and "other of his friends" whom he met in the rebel's train. A herald belonging to the Duke of Exeter was also attached to the insurgent leader; for the turbulent ruffian affected the manners of gentle birth. The defenceless state of London invited the approach of the rebels. The tower alone was weakly

* Fabian. † Hall.

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guarded by Lord Seales; and the citizens, at a meeting convened by the Lord Mayor, ordered an alderman into custody who boldly advised them to shut their gates upon the mob, who were already in possession of Southwark.* The fears, or the wishes of the majority prevailed, and the civic authorities lowered the drawbridge to give Cade admission. Suspecting treachery he cut the ropes with his sword, and riding triumphantly through the streets struck London stone with the blade of his weapon, exclaiming, "Now is Mortimer Lord of the City!" He declared in person, and caused the same proclamation to be made by others, that his followers had strict orders to abstain from plunder: he had already beheaded one of his officers for disobedience, and on the first and second days of his entry he gave an example of moderation which was universally obeyed. To prevent the possibility of any disturbance he drew off his forces in the evening to their quarters in Southwark.

July 3. 1450.

Hitherto Cade had not been guilty of any very flagrant act. A man of the name of Baylly lost his life for claiming the rebel's acquaintance; and the incident has furnished our great dramatic poet with a highly characteristic scene. Fabian informs us that the pretended Mortimer, unwilling that his birth and early history should be blazoned abroad, denounced his old companion as a sorcerer, aware that he usually carried scrolls and prophecies about his person. The books were found; and the poor wretch, convicted of the sin of witchcraft, was instantly condemned to death.

* Fabian.

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On the third of July, Cade proceeded to Guild-hall, and commanded the mayor and council to sit in judgment upon Lord Say, who had probably been delivered up to him as we do not hear of any assault upon the tower. The arraigned noble claimed to be tried by his peers, and was instantly hurried away by the insurgents to the standard in Cheapside where they struck off his head.

Mile End was in possession of a band of rioters who had risen in Essex; on that morning they had seized upon the sheriff of Kent, Crowmer, son-in-law of Lord Say, and the partner of his extortions, and their vengeance could be only satiated with his blood; bearing the gory heads of their respective victims upon poles, the two parties met each other in the streets, and with sickening and savage exultation displayed the trophies of their inhumanity to the brutal derision of a furious mob. Robbery quickly followed upon murder. Cade himself relaxed in his discipline, and plundered the house of a draper where he had been hospitably entertained. The rabble of London relieved from the restraint imposed upon them, eagerly sought to enrich themselves with the property of their wealthy neighbours; and alarmed by the prospect of general pillage, the more respectable classes, in conjunction with Lord Scales, took measures to expel the marauders from the city.* At nightfall they attacked Cade upon the bridge, who aware of their design had assembled his partizans in great numbers: the rebels made a vigorous resistance, frequently repulsing their assailants; after a sharp conflict of six hours in which

* Fabian.

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many of each party lost their lives, the Londoners succeeded in forcing the bridge, and Cade was compelled to retreat. This disaster encouraged the archbishops of Canterbury and York, who were in the tower, to try the effect of negotiation, they dispatched the Bishop of Winchester to the church of Saint Margaret's on the opposite side of the river, with pardons under the great seal for all who should lay down their arms. Cade was induced to accept the royal mercy, which was eagerly received by his followers, many of whom returned home; but recovering his spirits, and suspicious that Henry's clemency would not be extended to the leader of the rebellion, he rallied the most staunch of his associates, and not finding himself strong enough to renew the attempt upon London, fell back to Dartford, and from thence to Rochester. He had, however, lost all his authority; regardless of the common cause each of the insurgents was intent upon seizing the plunder which had been carried from the capital; unanimity was at an end, and Cade perceiving that every hope of regaining his command was lost, mounted a horse and fled into Sussex. A reward of a thousand marks had been set upon the rebel's head, his movements had been carefully watched, and Alexander Iden, the new sheriff of Kent, following close upon his track, overtook him in an orchard near the town of Lewes. A desperate conflict ensued. Cade's brave defence purchased for him a soldier's death, he fell under the sword of the royalist, who carried the traitor's head to London,

where it was placed upon the bridge. The principal ringleaders of the rebellion suffered upon the scaffold, and it was afterwards alleged against the Duke of York that they had confessed a design to place him upon the throne in the event of their success.*

* Hall. Holingshed. Stow.

CHAPTER XV.

National Discontent—Impolitic Conduct of the Government—York's Departure from Ireland—he summons his Friends—Murder of Tresham—York enters London—his Interview with the King—Queen Margaret's Displeasure—Buckingham's Interference—Parliament Summoned—Arrival of Somerset—his unpopularity—Outrage of the Mob—The Peers attend Parliament—Resolution to impeach Somerset—Insolent Proposition of a Lawyer—Proceedings of the Parliament—York secures Somerset—The attempted Vindication by Somerset's Friends—Norfolk's Speech—Private Feuds—Fierce Spirit of the Nobles—York's Retirement to Ludlow—his Proclamation—Levies Forces—The King at the head of an Army—York encamps at Dartford—Embassy from the King—York demands the Arrest of Somerset—Decision of the Council—York's Second Interview with the King—Angry Meeting between Somerset and York—York carried a Prisoner to London—Henry's Clemency—Somerset's Ascendance—Embassy from Guienne—Expedition under Talbot—his Success—his Reverses—Encounters the French Army—is defeated and slain—Fall of Guienne—Description of the Duchy—The English driven out of France.

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THE insurrection was quelled, but it was followed by a very short interval of tranquillity. A large portion of the nation disliked the government of the queen, and were anxious to see the Duke of York at the head of the ministry. He was not without ambition, though deeply indebted to Henry for the restoration of the forfeited titles and estates of his family he had received ample cause for discontent in the

preference accorded by his sovereign to his personal enemies. His faithful services to the crown seemed to demand confidence, and at a period in which the nation had strongly expressed their dissatisfaction with the measures of the court, he was encouraged by numerous partizans to assert his just pretensions to a share in the royal councils. CHAP. XV.

Henry's imbecility and dislike to public business seemed to warrant the interference of a kinsman so nearly allied, and so capable of conducting an administration from whence he had been entirely excluded without sufficient cause.' It was the policy of Margaret of Anjou and her party to prevent the duke from gaining a higher degree of ascendance over the public mind; it seemed dangerous to trust a man with power who was not only in the event of the king's death presumptive heir to the crown, but who possessed rights which he would probably claim at the first favourable moment. We cannot therefore be surprised at the queen's unyielding resolution rather to engage in open war than to admit him into the cabinet. Unfortunately both the talents and the virtue of the kingdom were opposed to Margaret, and the misconduct of her principal favourites afforded but too fair a pretext for their removal from the royal presence. Notwithstanding the rebellious spirit which was abroad, as yet scarcely a disloyal word had been breathed, even the proclamations of Cade were couched in the king's name, and the errors of the government attributed entirely to unworthy ministers. The enmity between York and Somerset furnished the former with a plausible motive for his expostulations, and whatever might

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have been his secret intentions his requests were reasonable, and limited to the modest privileges of a prince of the blood.

1452. Sept. 1.

The duke's movements, however, were calculated to excite alarm. He quitted Ireland without the permission or recall of the king in September, proceeded to his castle in Wales, and there distrusting it should seem the nature of his reception at court, mustered a sufficient force to ensure his safe conduct to London. Amid those who attended his summons was the late speaker of the House of Commons, Tresham, one of the Duke of Suffolk's most determined opponents. Whilst upon his journey he was assaulted by the people of the Lord Grey of Ruthyn,* who to the amount of a hundred and sixty men armed with swords and spears lay in wait for him under a hedge, and put him to death whilst he was repeating his matins to the virgin.† We do not know whether Lord Grey participated in this murder, or whether it was caused by private pique or political animosity. The perpetrators, who also carried off the horse and valuables of the deceased, were outlawed.

Sept.

At the end of the month, the Duke of York advanced to London with a retinue of four thousand men, a number sufficient to prevent the interference of Lord Lyle, son of the famous Talbot, who had been directed to oppose his progress. Arriving at the palace of Westminster, he knelt before the king, and having represented the disturbed state of the country in consequence of the great neglect of the administration of justice, entreated him to summon a parliament that measures might be taken to redress

* William of Wynchester. † Parliament Ro[illegible]

these grievances. York's conduct in this interview is differently reported; in the preamble to his subsequent attainder it is stated that he assumed a menacing aspect, filled the chamber with a multitude of armed men, who beat down the spears and walls, and that he retired covered with confusion at the king's rebuke. But there is a passage in the Paston letters which gives a more favourable idea of the duke's behaviour. The writer observes, "It is said that my Lord of York has been with the king and departed in right good conceit with the king, but not in great conceit with the queen."* Henry with his usual meekness, was probably disposed to listen to the duke had Margaret, permitted; but that strong-minded woman saw danger and scrupled not to declare her suspicions in the intruder's presence. She charged him with treason, and would have sent him to the tower had not the Duke of Buckingham interposed. A steady friend to the house of Lancaster, Buckingham was at this time displeased by the sudden dismissal of his two brothers from the honourable offices of Treasurer and Chamberlain; we learn from the same letter already quoted that he manifested his resentment by opposing Margaret. The writer states, that "the duke's opinion is contrary to the queen's intent." Though threatened with imprisonment and attainder for his boldness the Duke of York gained his point. A Parliament was summoned to meet in the following November, and in the interim he retired to his castle of Fotheringay.

Soon after the departure of York, the Duke of Somerset arrived from France. Margaret hailed his

* Fenn's Collection, vol. I.

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return with joy; but the people, exasperated against him by the loss of Normandy, viewed his favour with the sovereign as an additional incentive to their hatred. He soon experienced the effects of the general indignation: the mob of London broke open and plundered his house in the Blackfriars. Flying from the fury of an enraged populace to the Thames, he was only rescued from impending death by the opportune approach of the Earl of Devonshire's barge, in which he took refuge.

The Duke of York came to the House of Peers well attended, as did also his friends the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Salisbury, and Richard Nevill, Salisbury's gallant son, the Lord Cobham, and the Earl of Devonshire. The result of numerous consultations which these nobles held with each other, was a determination to impeach Somerset.

Early in the sitting of parliament, Thomas Young, a lawyer and member for Bristol, boldly asserted the necessity of naming the heir apparent, the king being without issue; and presumed even to mention the Duke of York as the most fitting person: the suggestion was ill received, and he was sent to the tower.*

On the day that Lord Say had been murdered, the Duchess of Suffolk, Thomas Daniel and others, impeached at the same time by Cade, only escaped a similar fate from being beyond the rebel's reach: these persons now demanded to be put upon their trial, and were immediately acquitted.† After a prorogation of six weeks the two houses met again. York openly accused Somerset of flagrant miscon-

* Parliament Rolls.

† Parliament Rolls.

duct in France, both by his negligence in suffering the truce to be broken by his officers, and thereby affording the French king a pretext to renew the war before preparation had been made by the English to support it, and his cowardly abandonment of the towns and castles committed to his care. He also charged him with having received bribes for his consent to the cession of Anjou and Maine, and with meditating to sell Calais to the Duke of Burgundy. Somerset's friends, without denying all these imputations, endeavoured to palliate his conduct. They contended that the offences if committed only amounted to a trespass; and the Duke of Norfolk indignantly replied, "That every true subject to the crown ought greatly to marvel that the loss of two so noble duchies as Normandy and Guienne, that be well worth a great nation, coming by succession to the said crown, is but trespass; whence it has been seen that the loss of towns and castles without siege, the captains that have lost them have been dead and beheaded and their goods lost."* The duke quoted several cases to support his opinion, and concluded by urging an inquiry into the state of the law upon this point, and upon the conduct of Somerset both in England and France. Norfolk's remonstrance was ineffectual, the queen's power upheld the favourite, and little was done to satisfy the malecontent party or to tranquillize the public mind.

The weakness of the government and the fatal differences of sentiment which agitated the nobles, occasioned innumerable feuds: appeals to arms were made all over the kingdom, and every quarrel was

* Fenn's Collection, vol. iii. p. 111.

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decided by the sword. The old historians draw a frightful picture of the state of society. We are told that the Duke of York narrowly escaped being put to death by the western men who fell upon him beyond St. Alban's, and would have slain him had not Sir William Oldhall interposed at the hazard of his life. There was an affray at Coventry between the Duke of Somerset's people and the townsmen, in which several of the latter were killed. *The Earl of Devonshire, for what cause we do not learn, besieged the Lord Bonville in his castle at Taunton, who surrendered at the Duke of York's approach; and in returning from the marriage of his son Thomas Neville the Earl of Salisbury, encountered and quar-

* A diligent search for the origin and nature of the quarrel between Lord Bonvill and the Earl of Devonshire, has only been rewarded by the following account given by Prince, in his Worthies of Devon, a writer too frequently in error to be of much authority. He says, "In the thirty-third year of Henry VI. there fell out a shrewd dispute between Thomas Courtney Earl of Devon and this Lord Bonvill, about a couple of hounds, which could by no mediation of friends be qualified or appeased, until it was valiantly tried by single combat on Clist Hill (Cliff Heath, according to Dugdale) near Exeter; wherein, as Dugdale tells us, this lord prevailed. But another writer saith, that after they had well tryed one the other's strength and valour with their naked swords, they at last, as was said of the two kings, Edmund and Canutus, in the isle of Olney, near Gloucester, A. D. 1016, lovingly agreed and embraced each other, and ever after continued in great amity; which I can hardly believe, for a reason which may hereafter be observed in reference to the lord. Not long after this the civil wars breaking out in England between the two famous houses of York and Lancaster, notwithstanding the honour and personal obligation this noble lord had received from Henry VI. he was always found on the side of the enemy, the Duke of York; but whether induced hereunto from a principle of mere conscience towards what he apprehended the right line, or by the subtile insinuations of Nevil Earl of Salisbury, whose daughter he had married to his grandson William Bonvill Lord Harrington, I shall not take upon me to determine."—*Worthies of Devon.*

relled with the Lord Egremont, near York. The old writers date the calamities which desolated England from circumstances which they do not mention connected with this conflict; probably the haughty temper of Salisbury, irritated by the insult he had received, burned for more signal vengeance. These fiery spirits should have been allowed to exhaust themselves in a foreign war. Henry V. sharing in the ardour of his subjects, led men to gather laurels abroad, who under his peaceable descendant engaged in murderous quarrels with each other. Margaret has been accused of preferring the interests of France to those of England. If the imputation be just, she suffered the punishment, for those who would have carried flame and sword into an enemy's country now fought with equal fury upon their own thresholds.

York at the conclusion of the session withdrew in sullen discontent to his castle at Ludlow. The name of Mortimer was powerful in the marches of Wales, and whilst great numbers of his tenants crowded to his standard, he issued proclamations, assuring the people that he intended only the good of his country, and the welfare of the king, to whom he professed the most profound and unshaken loyalty.* Henry prepared to repel this forcible interference with his government by the sword; accompanied by the Duke of Somerset and other lords, he marched at the head of a powerful army to meet the force opposed against him; this spirited movement seems to have disconcerted the duke, who avoiding an engagement crossed the Thames at Kingston, and proceeded into

1452. Feb. 16.

* Fabian.

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Kent, a hot-bed of sedition, where he hoped to gain a considerable accession of strength: he entrenched himself on a heath near Dartford, and fortified his camp with artillery. The king closely following his opponent's route, drew up the royal forces at Blackheath, and by the advice of his council, dispatched the Bishops of Winchester and Ely to inquire the cause of his kinsman's hostile appearance. York again protesting his attachment to the crown, complained of many grievances—of being accused of treason and threatened with arrest; he assured the prelate that he did not take up arms either to endanger the king or any other good man, but with the intent to remove from his councils those ill-disposed persons who were the common oppressors of all ranks and classes and, naming the Duke of Somerset as the cause of infinite evil, demanded that he should be put upon his trial.* The king's friends debated upon this answer, and advised him as the best hope of subduing a dangerous insurrection without the effusion of blood, to pacify the malecontent party by appearing at least to comply with their requests. The Duke of Somerset was reported to be in custody by the king's command. York, "the easy-natured," as he has been termed, trusting to the good faith of the sovereign's promise, disbanded his army upon the assurance of Somerset's dismissal and restraint, a measure which, if unwary, proved that he at least was sincere in asserting that he desired only to reform, and not to overthrow the government. He repaired alone and uncovered to the royal tent, and to his surprise and conster-

* Hall.

nation was confronted by his rival, who at perfect liberty seemed to be as high as ever in the favour of the king. Each retorted the charge of treason upon the other; Somerset accused York of meditating the seizure of the crown, and told him that if he had not learned to play the king by his regency in France, he had never forgot to obey as a subject when he returned to England:* and addressing Henry advised the duke's immediate arrest. York, astonished, but not abashed, replied with equal spirit; and as he quitted the royal tent found himself a prisoner: he was placed on horseback and conveyed in the usual manner to London, riding before the king. Somerset urged the trial and execution of his enemy, but it was not possible to prevail upon the mild and pious Henry, always averse to the shedding of blood, to consent to the death of so near a relation; and the council, alarmed by intelligence that the young Earl of March was hastening at the head of an army to effect his father's release, proposed the terms of a reconciliation between the offender and his sovereign. The Duke of York willingly consented to renew his oath of fealty and allegiance as the price of his liberty, and in the most solemn manner in St. Paul's church, in the presence of a numerous assemblage, swore upon the sacrament eternal fidelity to the king.† He was then permitted to return to his castle at Wigmore, and Somerset again at the head of affairs, enjoyed the most unbounded confidence both from Margaret and her weak husband. Paramount at court, we are told that he ruled by his word

* Leland. † Stow.

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alone, and that no other voice was heard in the council chamber.*

The discomfiture of the Duke of York and the total failure of his enterprize seemed to ensure the security of the house of Lancaster, and an opportunity now offered for the recovery of part of the English possessions in France, and the renewal of those glorious achievements which had riveted the affections of the nation to their triumphant monarchs. The inhabitants of Guienne, who paid unwilling allegiance to their new master, gave Henry secret intelligence of the weakness of the French garrisons, and invited him by an embassy dispatched on pur-
1452. pose, to assist them in expelling the invaders from the dutchy. The prospect of renewing the war under such favourable auspices filled the nation with joy. The veteran Talbot was selected for this honourable service, a commander whose very name inspired terror throughout the dominions of Charles; but he was in his eightieth year, and though the hero of innumerable battles, had gained reputation in the field more by the prowess of his single arm than by his skill in military tactics. On his first appearance the hero of Henry V.'s wars performed his usual wonders. Landing with four thousand men, and supported by the good will of the Gascons, Talbot advanced to Bourdeaux; the French garrison frightened, as Fuller quaintly observes, by the bare fame of his approach, fled from the spot; the English flag again waved over the towers, and with the co-operation of Lord Lisle, who joined him with a reinforcement equal in strength to his own army, he

* Hall.

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regained the whole of the Bordelais, together with Chatillon in Perigord. The town of Fronsac surrendered in the following spring; but this success was his last. Charles VII. dispatched a formidable array against Chatillon, under the Marshals Loheac and Jalagnes: they invested it with twenty-two thousand men, Talbot, anxious to prevent the fall of this important fortress, rushed eagerly to its relief. By the celerity of his movements he surprized a considerable detachment of the French, dispersed and cut them to pieces. Those who fled warned the main body of the approach of the English, and Talbot found the enemy well prepared to receive him, being drawn up in a camp strongly entrenched and provided with three hundred pieces of cannon. Flushed with recent victory, and unwilling to check the enthusiasm of his followers, the undaunted soldier hazarded an assault. He was gallantly supported, and victory for a moment promised to reward the generous daring of these devoted men. The French quailed under the shock of their resolute attack; but the Count Penthieore coming up at the instant with fresh troops, the English overpowered by numbers made a glorious defence, but could no longer hope to gain the battle. Talbot fell mortally wounded: escape was in the power of the valiant Lisle; but determined upon the rescue of his father, though assured that all was lost, he disdained to fly, and was slain in the futile attempt.* The battle already decided was discon-

Oct. 1453. July.

* Monstrelet.

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tinued at the death of the commander; the soldiers retreated on all sides, and a thousand men who had cut their way to Chatillon were taken prisoners. The victorious army now directed their arms against Bourdeaux which was closely besieged. Six thousand citizens resolutely defended it for the space of seven weeks, and at the expiration of that period only capitulated from the pressure of famine. They obtained honourable terms, provided for the safety of the English inhabitants, and having boldly though ineffectually struggled for their liberties, suffered themselves to be irrevocably attached to the French dominions.

A rich gem was plucked out of the crown of England by the loss of Guienne. Hall tells us that "the keeping of this fair duchy was neither costly nor troublesome to the realm; for by the sovereignty of that country young gentlemen acquired experience in the art of war, and expert men were promoted to rich offices." No longer called upon to achieve fresh victories, or to defend the possessions gained by their predecessors, the nobles, in the dearth of all foreign military enterprize, eagerly espoused the factions which so unhappily divided the kingdom. An anecdote preserved by Camden may not be misplaced here, since it enables us to form a vivid idea of the lawless state of society and the distraction which prevailed. He says, "After the battle in which Shrewsbury was slain, when the flame of inward war began to flash out in England, the martial men were called home out of France to maintain the factions here; at which

time a French captain scoffingly asked an English- CHAP. XV.
man when they should return again to France? He answered feelingly and upon true ground, 'When your sins shall be greater and more grievous in the sight of God than ours are now.'"

CHAPTER XVI.

State of the Revenue—Somerset's Ascendance—his new Appointment—Reports to his Prejudice—Murmurs of the Yorkists—Council at Coventry—Margaret's Progresses—her Affability—Extravagance in Dress—Margaret Paston's Letter—Proceedings of the Parliament—Henry's Illness—Birth of the Prince of Wales—Calumnies against the Queen—Return of York—Arrest of Somerset—Quarrels of the Duke of Exeter—Judgment passed on Thorp—Mildness of York's Government—Impeachment of the Earl of Devonshire—York's Speech—Henry's Malady—York made Protector—Creation of the Prince of Wales—York's Application to Parliament—Margaret's Enmity—The King's Recovery—his Piety—York's Indignation—Consultation with his Friends—Splendour of the Nevills—The Nobles take up Arms—The King's Levies—Henry's Message to the Insurgents—their Answer—Spirited Speech of the King—Battle of St. Alban's—Death of the Lancastrian Nobles—Flight of the King's Friends—Henry made Prisoner—Pillage of the Town—Prophecy concerning Somerset—Northumberland's Devotedness—Clifford's Valour—Piety of the Monks—Respectful Demeanour of York—Alleged Letter to the Chancellor—The Yorkists are pardoned—Conduct of the Lancastrians—Troubles throughout England—Threatened Hostility in London—State of the King's Health—York resumes the Protectorate—his Enmity to the Lancastrians—Margaret's Apprehensions—Return of her Party to Power.

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THE expenditure of the crown having greatly exceeded its revenue, and the "poor commons,"* as they are styled, not being able to bear the pressure of new taxes, the Parliament passed an act for the

* Parliament Rolls.

repeal of the royal grants, with the exception of a certain number; a measure which however necessary could not fail to displease those rapacious courtiers who had so largely profited by the king's munificence. Somerset remained at the head of the administration, receiving each day fresh proofs of the monarch's favour. All honours were dispensed through his hands, and he was appointed to be Captain of Calais, in the place of a tried servant of the crown, the Duke of Buckingham. This new advancement we are told grieved and offended not only the commons but the nobility also, who did not hesitate to affirm that "as he had lost Normandy, so would he lose Calais."* The Duke of York and his party inflamed the public discontent by their bitter animadversions upon the king and the government. Henry's passive disposition and monkish habits were represented as unworthy of his high station. They depicted the favourite in the blackest colours, as mischievous, tyrannical and covetous; and these continual strictures, we are informed by our chronicler, weakened the attachment of many persons of rank to the reigning monarch; and restless spirits, discontented with their present condition, or from mere wantonness anxious for change, were easily wrought upon to espouse the quarrel of a prince whose exaltation would cause honours and dignities to flow through a new channel.†

Henry, unfitted himself to rule a kingdom in troublesome times, and too strongly attached to the scarcely less incapable yet more ambitious Somerset, to confide the reins of government to stronger hands,

* Hall. † Hall.

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was yet earnestly desirous to conciliate the Duke of York; the king's love of justice we may believe incited him to a measure which in many would have been only the result of policy; he assembled a grand council at Coventry and invited the contending lords to discuss their differences in his presence, committing the decision to the surrounding nobles.* It does not appear to have been difficult to appease the Duke of York; the meeting ended amicably, and had not untoward circumstances subsequently thrown the kingdom into a chaos of confusion the mild temper of the parties immediately concerned might have rendered the harmony which this meeting produced between the sovereign and his kinsman of permanent duration.

1452. April.

Margaret took advantage of the short interval of tranquillity which ensued to ingratiate herself with the gentry of some of the neighbouring counties. The Paston letters have preserved an account of her visit to Norwich, whither it appears she proceeded at the head of a gay and elegant court, soliciting with much affability and grace the company of those ladies whom circumstances prevented from approaching her without an invitation.† The queen gained the good-will of the provincial fair by her condescen-

* William of Wyrcestre.

† Margaret Paston says, "The queen sent after my cousin Elizabeth Clere, to come to her, and she durst not disobey the commandment." This expression, as the writer had previously paid her respects to the royal visitor, would lead us to imagine that her cousin either did not think herself eligible to appear at court, or staid away until she had received an invitation in consequence of the political bias of the family. Whichever supposition we adopt Margaret deserves great credit for so excellent a method of winning the female part of the community to her interests.

sion: and the splendour of her appearance may be inferred by the necessity which Margaret Paston informs her husband she was under, of borrowing her cousin Elizabeth's necklace,* "as she durst not for shame go with her beads before so many fine gentlewomen."

The attire in these days though cumbrous was magnificent. Margaret is represented in a picture preserved by Walpole in a robe embroidered round the hem with a verse of a psalm; and we hear of head-dresses so high that doors were obliged to be enlarged to admit them; the native country of the queen then, as at the present time, gave the laws of fashion to England: and the utmost extravagance and pomp had been introduced in France by Isabel of Bavaria. Froissart observes, that though there had been many gay queens before, "there was never one so trimmed out as she," and the rude English strongly attached to showy ornaments, eagerly adopted the most absurd and expensive decorations for the person. Henry was perhaps the only individual in his kingdom who refused to wear the pointed and upturned shoes so universally esteemed by the gallants of the time; these, always ridiculous, grew at last to such an immoderate length that laws were enacted against them. In 1465 it was proclaimed throughout England, that the "beakes or pikes of shoes or boots should not passe two inches

* The lady takes advantage of this circumstance to ask her husband for a new ornament.

"I pray you do your cost on me against Whitsuntide, that I may have something for my neck."—*Fenn's Collection*, pages 68, 70.

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upon paine of cursing by the clergy, and forfeiting twenty shillings."

Margaret not trusting wholly to the beauty of her person, and the richness of her dress, strove by even more powerful arts to increase her popularity. She asked the young ladies questions about their lovers, and professed herself pleased with their answers. Margaret Paston says of her cousin, "the queen reporteth of her in the best wise, and saith by her truth she saw no gentlewoman since she came to Norfolk that she liked better;"* and though no other commendations have reached us, Margaret doubtless took care to send away all her guests in equal good humour.

1453. In the following March the king assembled a parliament at Reading. It was considered expedient to raise an army of twenty thousand archers for the maintenance of the peace of the kingdom, and each city and county was to furnish its quota, and return them at their own expense.† The king also asked and obtained a grant for the necessary subsidies for his whole life, although it had not been customary to vote them for a longer period than two or three years. The liberality of the commons drew forth a speech of gracious thanks from the kind-hearted monarch, who did not however experience the same ready co-operation with his wishes from his subjects; the proposed levy was unfavourably received, at least we may infer the public disapprobation since the project was relinquished. It was intended that the king should have commanded in person, and his

*Fenn's Collection, vol. i. † Parliament Rolls.

declining state of health was scarcely a sufficient reason for the abandonment of a measure which would have placed a large force at the disposal of the crown. The king's illness assumed an alarming character; as the winter approached, he sunk into a state of helpless unconsciousness, both body and mind sympathizing in a malady which rendered his limbs powerless and paralyzed the mental faculties. CHAP. XVI.

Margaret at this inauspicious period was delivered of a son; had the unfortunate infant entered the world during the first years of his parent's marriage, his birth would have been hailed with universal acclamations; but a large portion of the nation had fallen from their allegiance to the house of Lancaster, and many desired the quiet succession of Richard Duke of York, when the present monarch should be removed by death; a hope which was destroyed by the inopportune appearance of another claimant to the throne: doubts of the legitimacy of this ill-fated prince were industriously circulated by the queen's enemies, and Margaret, never an object of popular regard, was now assailed by calumnies which made a strong impression upon the vulgar ear.* Oct. 13. 1453.

The lamentable situation of the king could not be disguised, and no longer enabled to act in his name the queen's party were obliged to admit the Duke of York to a place in the cabinet. The arrest of Somerset soon followed, a measure which it would appear was adopted by the duke's friends, to preserve him from falling into the hands of his determined foe, as he states himself in a letter to the

* Fabian.

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King of Scotland, "that his being in the tower was owing to the advice of the lords of the king's council, which," he continues, "as I understood was mooste for the surety of my person:"* the arrest took place in the queen's public chamber.† York subsequently arraigned him before the parliament, but the Lancastrian party were sufficiently strong to prevent his impeachment from being followed by a trial, and the only inconvenience which he sustained was an imprisonment of fourteen months.

The Duke of Exeter was also in custody. Of the exact cause we are left uninformed, but it was probably not of a political nature, his turbulent disposition even involved him in deadly quarrels with the chiefs of the faction which he had espoused. The Lord Cromwell obtained an act to bind him to keep the peace under a severe penalty, and some idea of his general conduct may be gained from a letter to John Paston, the writer of which stating that he was then at large, prays "God to give him good council hereafter."‡ The Duke of York proceeded at law against Thorp, a baron of the Exchequer and speaker to the house of commons, one of the most active partizans of Somerset and the queen, for a trespass. Thorp was convicted and adjudged to pay damages to the amount of a thousand pounds, in default of which he was committed to the Fleet.

* Harleian MS.

† The Duke of Somerset was arrested in the Queen's great chamber and sent to the Tower of London, where he without great solemnitie kept a dolefull Christmas.—*Hall*, page 232.

‡ Fenn's Collection, vol. i.

The commons petitioned* the lords to procure the release of their speaker, but they refused to interfere; and another was chosen. We do not know how far the Duke of York was justified in his prosecution of this man, but in other respects his government was remarkable for its moderation. An attempt was made by the opposite party to impeach the loyalty of one of his adherents, with a view, if we may judge from the result, to extend the imputation to York himself. The Earl of Devonshire was accused of treason, and being put upon his trial was immediately acquitted. On this occasion the duke, who conceived that he had been included in the attack upon his friend, addressed the assembled lords, declaring that the indictment as far as it touched him was false and untrue, for he had always been a faithful liegeman to the king, and never even in thought or action intended aught against him;† and then calling the saints of heaven to bear witness to the truth of his asseveration, he offered as a knight to adventure his body in support of his innocence. CHAP. XVI.

The king's disorder increased to a fearful extent. Upon the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which happened in March, a deputation of peers was sent to his residence at Windsor to condole with him upon his sickness, and receive his commands respecting a successor to the vacant see, should he be able to comprehend the purport of their visit. The commissioners brought a melancholy report of the monarch's infirmity of mind; he had sunk into a state of torpor from which it was impossible to arouse him; he breathed indeed, but of rational 1454.

* Parliament Rolls. † Parliament Rolls.

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existence there was no indication, his eyes gazed upon vacancy, his ears echoed no sound, he was speechless and motionless, nor did he acknowledge by a single sign the slightest consciousness of their unwearied efforts to awaken him from his dumb insensibility.*

The communication made by the lords respecting Henry's distressing condition ratified the appointment of the Duke of York as protector to the realm. The wisdom of the parliament imposed the usual restraints upon this high office; the duke was merely placed at the head of the council, and entrusted with the command of the army in case of rebellion or invasion: and great care was taken to preserve the rights of the infant heir who had been created Prince of Wales; the protectorate being limited to the duration of the king's illness or the minority of the prince, to whom when he became of age it was to be resigned.

Fearing perhaps to incur the charge of an ambitious usurpation of a dignity which parliament could alone confer, the duke entreated the peers to give an assurance that they of their free will and without any presumption of his own (since he was anxious only to perform his humble obedience to his sovereign lord) had called upon him to fulfil their especial desire in taking the authority with which he had been invested: and the parliament acceding to this request, and expressing at the same time their full confidence in his loyalty, an act was framed upon the model of that passed in the minority of the reigning monarch.†

* Parliament Rolls. † Parliament Rolls.

It was most unfortunate that the queen's inveterate prejudices prevented her from seeking the friendship of a man who did not become the enemy of his prince until he had been treated as a rival and a foe. Margaret hastened the catastrophe she dreaded by her uncompromising enmity: the minute causes of the hatred which burned so fiercely in her bosom being hidden from us we cannot tell how deeply it was merited, but judging only from the facts preserved in history, an impartial mind will acquit the duke of those long laid designs of treason attributed to him by the writers of the Lancastrian party.

The danger which might have been apprehended from the king's illness, and the power which it committed into his kinsman's hands, were averted by the precaution of the parliament, and the temperate conduct of the Duke of York; and had the protectorate lasted there is reason to believe that Richard Plantagenet would have become the prop of the throne which he afterwards shook to its base.

Henry suddenly recovered from his afflicting lethargy, which had lasted nearly a year, and the first act of his returning reason displayed the fervour of his piety, his almoner being dispatched with an offering to the shrine of St. Edward at Canterbury. The news soon spread and the king's friends crowded around him; we learn from the Paston letters that when the queen brought the infant prince to a parent hitherto unconscious of the gift, he inquired its name, and when told that it was Edward, "held up his hands and thanked God thereof." He avowed the stupor which had oppressed his mental faculties, 1454.

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observing "that he knew not what had been said to him or where he had been." Retaining the meek and placid disposition for which he had ever been distinguished, he declared himself to be in charity with all the world, uttering at the same time a devout but ineffectual wish that all the lords were in the same happy temperament. The Bishop of Winchester and the Prior of St. John after having been admitted to their monarch's presence wept for joy. They reported that he had spoken to them as well as ever; and continuing still to amend, the administration was again changed.*

The Duke of York's protectorate ended of course, but he was also somewhat invidiously deprived of the command of Calais, to which he had been appointed for seven years: it was given to Somerset, who released from his imprisonment now took the lead in the government.

York did not see himself thus supplanted without bitter indignation. A second time it was proposed that the almost innumerable disputes which had arisen between these implacable rivals should be settled by arbitration.† York gave a sullen consent, but regardless of the decision, whatever it might be, retired in undisguised resentment to his northern possessions. Bent upon revenge, and judging perhaps from his own feelings towards Somerset, that his life was not safe whilst his adversary continued in power, the duke aroused the fierce passions of his friends by his representations and complaints. Richard of York was nearly connected with the powerful family of the Nevills, having married

* Fenn's Collection, vol. i. † Rymer.

Cecily daughter of the Earl of Westmoreland, and sister of the Earl of Salisbury, raised to the earldom in right of his wife the heiress of Thomas Montacute, slain before Orleans. The Earl of Salisbury potent by his valour and his riches was surpassed in both by his son Richard Nevill,* the most splendid peer that England ever boasted. Princely in his mode of living, frank, courteous, high spirited, and liberal, the excess of these virtues secured a more extensive popularity than any subject had ever yet attained. The Earl of Warwick's chivalric bearing and gorgeous magnificence won the favour of the nobility; his boundless hospitality filled his castles with retainers, and his munificence procured the idolatrous attachment of the common people, who tasted his bounty themselves, or saw it bestowed upon the friendless wanderer, the disbanded soldier, the decayed gentleman, and the multitude of needy applicants who crowded to his gates, and were never suffered to depart without relief.

These haughty barons were easily induced to second the violent measures of their aggrieved kinsman; he was joined also by Lord Cobham, and the confederates raised their followers with the determination of expelling the Duke of Somerset from the royal councils by force of arms.

Henry prepared with unusual spirit to resist this insolent invasion of his right. Attended by Somerset, the Duke of Buckingham, and his son, the Earl of Stafford, the Earls of Northumberland and Wiltshire,

* Richard Nevill like his father acquired his immense riches by a fortunate marriage, he espoused the heiress of the Beauchamps, and to this splendid alliance he owed the proud title of Warwick.

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and Lord Clifford, he hastened from London to prevent a conjunction between York and his friends in the metropolis, and proceeded northwards to meet and punish the disturbers of the public peace. The king reached St. Albans, on the 22d of May, in time to prevent the entrance of the hostile lords, whose banners were visible from the walls. By Henry's commands the Duke of Buckingham advanced to inquire the motives which had armed the hands of the insurgents against their sovereign.* York boldly demanded the surrender of the Duke of Somerset, yet was careful to preserve a tone of respectful entreaty throughout his reply, in which he prayed† and besought the king to trust him as his faithful and humble subject, and for the love of God and of charity to consider the true cause of his appearance, and to act graciously towards his liege men, who with the whole of their forces would be ready at all times to live and die in maintaining his right, and to obey all his commands, for the welfare of his crown and the good of the realm. Farther, the duke in behalf of himself and his colleagues implored Henry by the excellent qualities of his heart and temper, to regard the justice of the petition of his liege men and subjects, who prayed the Almighty to assist him in his decision, and trusted that through the mediation of the glorious martyr Saint Alban, he would be convinced of the necessity of their interference,

* Whethamstade.

† See account of the first battle of St. Albans from a contemporary manuscript communicated by John Bayly, Esq. F.S.A. to the Society of Antiquaries, and printed in the twentieth volume of the Archæologia.—*Stow*, &c.

which the Almighty Judge of human hearts knew to be prompted by the purest motives. "Wherefore," continued the duke, "gracious Lord, be pleased of your high majesty to deliver into our hands such persons as we shall accuse, in order that they may receive the doom they merit, and you be honoured and obeyed as our just and rightful king; but as the most sacred and solemn promises which we have hitherto received have been broken, we now declare that we will not relinquish our intention either for promise or for oath until the man against whom our hostility is directed be given up to us, or we perish in the field."

Henry, fired with generous indignation by the arrogant pretensions of the insurgents and their relentless animosity to his favourite, answered with unwonted energy: "I, Henry, King of England, charge and command that all manner of persons, of whatsoever degree, estate, or condition, shall instantly quit the field, and not be so hardy as to make resistance to me in mine own land; for I desire to know what traitor dare be so bold as to raise forces in my kingdom, when through the machinations of evil men I am in great trouble and heaviness. And by the faith I owe to Saint Edmund and the crown of England, I will utterly destroy those traitors, either by the sword or the hands of the executioner, as an example to all such as shall presume to defy their king and governor; and to conclude, rather than abandon the faithful friends who have sought my protection, I will this day venture my life in their quarrel, and for their sake live or die."

Upon receiving this spirited answer from the king,

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York assembled his council, and finding bloodshed to be inevitable, said: "The king our sovereign lord will not be reformed by our intreaties, nor will he understand the intention of our appearing before him in arms; but is fully determined to pursue us to the utmost extremity, and should we fall into his power to deliver us up to a shameful death, whereby we shall lose our lands and chattels, and our heirs be disgraced for ever. Therefore as we cannot escape death, it were better to fall upon the field, than to make a cowardly submission, and perish ignominiously: moreover considering in what evil plight England stands at this hour, it behoves us all to lend a vigorous assistance to remedy the mischiefs and redress the grievances which now prevail, and to acquit ourselves like men in this quarrel; beseeching that Lord who is King of Glory to keep and save us this day in our right, that through the help of his holy grace we may be made strong to withstand the abominable malice of those who purpose fully to destroy us by a disgraceful death; we therefore, Lord, pray to thee to be our comfort and defender, for the right of England standeth in us." The duke's sentiments being fully approved by his confederates, both parties unsheathed the sword.

The king's forces did not exceed two thousand men; but in holding the town, they possessed an advantage over York, whose numbers were superior by one-third. Lord Clifford had the charge of the barriers; they were vigorously assaulted, but the resolution of his followers prevented the enemy from making any impression. Richard Nevill in seeking for a weaker point commenced a furious assault

upon the garden side: the soldiers, animated by his noble daring, shouted "a Warwick! a Warwick!" The enthusiastic cry inspired them with redoubled spirit; they burst through the barriers, a deadly struggle ensued, and the battle was fought hand to hand in the streets. Three of the Lancastrian nobles rushed to the onset with dauntless intrepidity; the steady valour of Somerset, Clifford, and Northumberland would have secured the victory, but for the admirable skill and conduct of the Duke of York;* as his followers fell or gave way, he supplied the places of the wounded and the weary from detachments in reserve, and obliged to maintain an unequal contest with continued reinforcements of fresh antagonists, those gallant soldiers were slain in despite of the most desperate resistance. CHAP. XVI.

The murderous showers of arrows which the archers of the malecontent party poured upon the royalists were irresistible, the king himself was struck in the neck, the Earls of Dorset and Stafford dangerously wounded, and the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Sudeley also hurt. Thus galled, the death of the three leaders proved the signal for flight, and the panic was so complete and universal, that the Earl of Wiltshire flung his armour in a ditch, Sir Philip Wentworth disgracefully abandoned the standard of the king, and the Duke of Buckingham, regarding his own safety rather than the danger of his master, retreated in haste without making the slightest attempt to rally the fugitives and avenge the dead. Stow tells us, that the departure of the Duke of Buckingham, who left the field wounded,

* Hall.

CHAP. XVI.

dispirited the royalists. Thorp was also in the battle, but made an early retreat.

According to the most accurate writers the loss on the Lancastrian side did not exceed forty-eight persons. Had the surviving nobles imitated the gallant conduct of those who fell, the victory in all probability would have rested with Henry. The unfortunate monarch, deserted and bleeding, sought refuge in the house of a tanner, whither the Duke of York immediately proceeded, and strove by the most respectful demeanor to allay his anger and calm his fears. The northern soldiers, always insatiate of plunder, pillaged the town, and the next morning when the Yorkists attended the king to London, the monks of the abbey, who had listened anxiously to the clash of arms and the groans of the wounded, now left their cells to gaze upon a melancholy spectacle. The maimed and mangled bodies of the slain lay in the streets transfixed with the barbed darts which had made such frightful havoc amid the partizans of the red rose.*

There is a tradition that the body of Somerset was found under the sign of a castle, thus fulfilling the prophetic warning of Margery Jourdemayn, the witch of Eye:—

"Let him shun castles,
Safer shall he be on the sandy plain,
Than where castles mounted stand."

The Earl of Northumberland, attached from a principle of gratitude to the Lancastrian family for his restoration by Henry V. after the forfeiture of

* Whethamstade.

the title and estates by the rebellion of his house, had incurred the hatred of the opposite party by his firm adherence to Henry's government, and now gave the last and most convincing proof of loyalty in pouring out his life-blood in his service. Lord Clifford, another faithful and unfortunate partizan, shared in the common destiny of his ancestors and immediate successor in falling by a violent death. An old and tried soldier, this nobleman's adventurous gallantry had brightened the fading glories of the English chivalry in France. Taking advantage of a wintry night of deep snow, Clifford directed his soldiers to put their shirts over their armour, and by this stratagem surprised and took the town of Ponthieu.*

The timid monks were at first afraid to remove the ghastly remains of these noblemen, lest they should incur the displeasure of the victor; but having obtained leave, the abbot sent out his servants to convey them into the monastery where the pious brethren performed their obsequies, and deposited them in the lady chapel in a line according to "their state, degree, and honour of their birth."†

Although the battle of St. Albans must be considered as the commencement of those civil wars which changed the dynasty of England, its disastrous consequences might have been prevented if the jealousy of the Lancastrians had permitted a more generous line of policy towards the victor. The conduct of York at this crisis affords a strong proof that his hostility was aimed solely against Somerset, and that he sought only to supplant the minister and

* Hall. † Gough. Whethamstade.

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not the sovereign. The king was a prisoner in his hands, three of the most powerful of his party slain, the rest discomfited and dispersed; he had already passed the rubicon by an act of open rebellion, he neither wanted courage nor resources to maintain his present formidable position, and his forbearance in candour must be attributed to a deep sense of duty and the obligation of his oath of allegiance. The duke sought to excuse rather than to justify the measures which he had pursued, assuring the king that he had written to the chancellor to explain the cause of his appearing in arms,* an act which he had then declared to be dictated entirely by the fear which he entertained of danger to his own person: and that he had farther expressed his determination to keep his loyalty unspotted, to lay aside his own particular quarrel, and to consult only the welfare of the king and the people; that again at Ware, he had dispatched a letter addressed to Henry himself, written in the same spirit, and had made several ineffectual attempts to see him previous to the battle; and that the intrigues of Somerset, with Thorp and Joseph, another of the duke's creatures, had been the cause of the fatal rencontre which ensued. Henry gave apparent credit to this statement, which if feigned showed at least a desire to sooth rather than to defy. He received the duke and his friends into favour. York was appointed to be constable of England, Warwick to be captain of Calais, with the custody of the sea also, and Viscount Bourchier was made treasurer; and having assured them of his entire confidence in their loyalty, and granted a full

* Parliament Rolls.

pardon for all past offences, they renewed their oath of allegiance. CHAP. XVI.

The Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Wiltshire reconciled themselves to the new administration, and buried for a time their resentment for their losses and disgrace on the field of St. Albans. Lord Dudley was sent to the Tower, and the Earl of Dorset, the son and successor to Somerset, was a prisoner in the custody of the Earl of Warwick. Sir Philip Wentworth incurred the contempt of all parties by his base desertion of the royal colours; the Duke of Norfolk, though the friend of York, would have had him hanged for his cowardice, and hiding his dishonoured head in Suffolk he dared not approach the king.*

The convulsed state of society during this session of Parliament shewed itself in continual storms. The Lords Warwick and Cromwell mutually accused each other of being the cause of the late battle; carrying their contentions even into the monarch's palace, and disputing in his presence;† and so haughtily did the proud Nevills resist the imputation of Cromwell, that the latter was obliged to appeal to the Earl of Shrewsbury for protection, who lodged him in consequence at the hospital of St. James. The retainers of York, Salisbury, and Warwick, distrusting danger, wore their armour in the streets and filled the barges of their lords with offensive weapons.‡ Henry issued proclamations to forbid this hostile array in fiery spirits so easily kindled, especially as upon every idle rumour the partizans of either faction drew their swords. Nor were the

* Paston Letters. † Paston Letters. ‡ Paston Letters, vol. i. p. 11.

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citizens more peaceably disposed. A report reached them that the life of the Duke of York had been attempted by three of the king's household, and they immediately flew to arms; the tumult being only appeased by the manifestation of the innocence of the accused. The feverish state of public feeling extended nearly over the whole kingdom. Nobles thirsted for each other's possessions, and revived the worst ages of barbarism by the lawless anarchy of their proceedings. The western counties were in a state of insurrection from the sanguinary war carried on between the Earl of Devonshire and Lord Bonvill, who prosecuted their ancient feud with increasing fury.

The king had again fallen into ill health, and the commons strongly representing the disturbed state of the country, the lords solicited the Duke of York to re-assume the title of protector, that by the authority of his office he might re-establish the peace of the realm. After a few scruples, which however were easily overcome, the duke accepted the proffered dignity. Hall, in speaking of the Duke of York's government, gives it this commendation, that he finds "no mention made of deferring justice or bribery, as was openly proved of those who ruled before his time;" but in removing, according to this author's statement, "all those whom the king loved and the queen favoured," he gave the Lancastrians too much reason to suppose that he would not be long content with the degree of power entrusted to his hands.

Nov. 1455.

Margaret could not be blind to the precarious state of her husband's health. The life of Henry

hung upon a thread; and in the event of his decease, she perhaps justly feared that the protector would not respect the rights of the infant heir. A less courageous woman would have trusted her cause to the good feeling of the nation, and the English would not have deserted the interests of an injured female and her helpless child; but with danger before her, a spirit to resent, and friends ready to encounter peril in her service, she boldly opposed herself to the ambition of the Duke of York. The Parliament in granting the commission of protector had shewn their steady devotion to the reigning family by naming Prince Edward as the duke's successor, should he on arriving at the proper age feel inclined to take the charge of the government upon himself. The queen's persevering activity improved this favourable bias, and at the recovery of the king, which took place at Christmas, she found herself strong enough to remove the duke from his high station in the cabinet. CHAP. XVI. 1455.

CHAPTER XVII.

York retires from the Administration—Calamitous Effects of the Battle of St. Albans—Lawless State of Society—Henry's Attempt at Pacification—Meeting at Coventry—Alarm of the Yorkists—The King's unwearied Endeavours to obtain Peace—The Nobles repair to London—Mayoralty of Sir Godfrey Boleyn—Mediation of the Archbishop of Canterbury—Concessions of the Yorkists—Procession to St. Paul's—Joy of the People—Warwick's naval Exploit—his Attendance at Westminster—Fatal Quarrel of his Retainers—his Flight to Calais—Renewal of Hostilities—Henry's amiable Character—Preparations of the Confederates—Activity of the Queen—Battle of Blore Heath—Valour of the Cheshire Men—Henry marches towards Ludlow—York's Proclamation—The King's Offer of Pardon—Reply of the Malecontents—False Report of Henry's Death—Defection of Sir Andrew Trollope—Alarm and Flight of the Yorkists—Submission of the Nobles—Henry's Clemency—Pillage of Ludlow—A Parliament summoned—Sweeping Bill of Attainder—Merciful Disposition of the King.

CHAP. XVII.

1456. Feb.

HENRY attended parliament in person, and the resignation of York and Salisbury immediately followed. The two houses revoked the commission granted to the former, and whatever might have been his secret feelings he submitted with patient acquiescence to the sovereign will, who in restoring his own friends to their places about his person, dismissed the intruders with his usual gracious kindness. Warwick was still allowed to retain the com-

mand of Calais, an oversight which afterwards proved fatal to the Lancastrians: but though York retired quietly to his castle of Wigmore, where he remained inactive for a considerable period, the bitter fruits of his late violent assumption of power appeared in the unextinguishable hatred which the deadly rencontre at St. Albans had kindled in the breasts of the contending nobles.

The opposite party now succeeding to power cried aloud for vengeance for the blood of those slain in the service of the king; and the Yorkists thus menaced by their enemies, surrounded themselves with bands of armed retainers, and trusted solely for their safety to the sword. The old grudge again broke out between the Earl of Egremont and the Nevills, the former made a fierce attack upon the Earl of Warwick, in which many lives were lost. Hall informs us that the Earl of Egremont was taken prisoner in this affray, and brought before the king and queen, who sate in council. The violence of the earl's conduct may be estimated by the result, since it could not pass uncensured by judges who might be inclined to favour a friend so potent and so faithful. He was condemned to pay a large sum to the Earl of Salisbury, and committed to Newgate, from whence by the assistance of his "fautors" we are told he escaped, to the great vexation of the sheriffs.

A spirit of insubordination displayed itself in Kent, and the Londoners in an affray between a foreigner and an Englishman,* who resented an affront which he had received in Italy, rushed as

* Hall.

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usual into the commission of indiscriminate and wanton murders.

In the dreadful ferment which for the space of two years agitated the nation, the queen discovered too many indications of the disaffection of the metropolis to render it a safe or a pleasant residence; but unwilling to betray her distrust, it is said, that upon the pretence of hawking and hunting she gradually removed the king to Coventry, a city thoroughly devoted to her interest. At the head of a weak and feeble government, totally unequal to devise or to execute those vigorous measures which could alone administer justice and restore tranquillity, Margaret has been accused of permitting her fears and her hatred to overcome the noble feelings of her lofty mind in an endeavour to compass the downfall of her enemies by treachery.

1456. The king heartily desirous to soothe the turbulent passions of his nobles, and to establish unanimity where wrath and discord raged, invited the Duke of York and his party to repair to Coventry to assist at a grand council convoked for the purpose of adjusting the differences which threatened such fatal consequences to the realm.* Depending upon the good faith of the royal word, the Yorkists attended the summons without the precaution of an armed retinue;† but retreated in consternation and haste upon receiving private information that a snare had been laid by the queen for their destruction. York speeded to Wigmore, Salisbury shut himself up in Middleham, and Warwick sailed to Calais. The

* Fabian. † Stow.

suspicion that Margaret had sanctioned a design so base and ruthless could not fail to deepen the resentment of men who had already received proofs of her enmity: henceforward their only dependence must be upon their own strength, against one who meditated the most deadly mischief beneath a betraying smile. No greater calamity could have befallen the queen than an unjust imputation which involved her in such deep guilt. If innocent she was indeed unfortunate, for the honest hearts of the English people were alienated by the supposition that York had narrowly escaped the fate which under similar circumstances had befallen the Duke of Gloucester. CHAP. XVII.

The pacific Henry still clung to the hope that amity might be restored by gentle means; again he summoned the great lords to his court, trusting that mutual explanations and concessions would lead to permanent peace: preparations were made in London for their reception, and in the beginning of the year they complied with the sovereign's mandate, each noble guarded by troops of armed and trusty vassals. Warwick appeared at the head of six hundred retainers in his own livery of scarlet, with the ragged staff embroidered upon their coats. York entrenched himself at Baynard's castle with four hundred men, and Salisbury displayed the wealth and consequence of his family by a number exceeded only by that of his gallant son. 1458.

The friends of the white rose, the ancient cognizance of Edmund of Langley, lodged within the city; the king and queen took up their residence at the bishop's palace, and the Lancastrians, of whom

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the most powerful were the Dukes of Buckingham, Somerset and Exeter, repaired to quarters without the walls, to avoid the constant collision of their followers, who amounted to two thousand men, with those of the opposite party. Sir Godfrey Boleyn, lord-mayor of London, the worthy ancestor of the wise and martial Elizabeth, prevented the dangers to be apprehended from the brawls of idle and hostile partizans by his unremitting exertions; he placed five thousand citizens under arms, and patroled the streets himself every night at the head of a band whose formidable numbers alone kept the factious in awe.* The Archbishop of Canterbury laboured hard to promote the king's charitable work; he was the medium of all communications between the two parties,† who met at different places and periods every day; he soothed their angry passions, and wrought upon the patriotic feeling which still existed in their breasts, by representing the dangerous situation of England from foreign enemies in its present divided state. At the conclusion of each day's debate the indefatigable prelate carried the proceedings of both councils to the king, who acted as supreme umpire.

Henry's honest impartiality fitted him for the office which had been assigned to him, and his unremitting efforts were at length crowned with success.

* Hall makes the following observation upon the virulent hatred of the two parties. "The Duke of York and his mates were lodged within the city, and the Duke of Somerset and all his friends sojourned without Temple Barr, Holborn, and other places in the suburbs: as who sayd, that as the Jews dysdained the company of the Samaritans, so the Lancastrians abhorred the familiarity of Yorkists' lyneage."

† Fan's Collection, p. 154.

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The Duke of York with the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick agreed to found a chantry for the repose of the souls of Somerset, Clifford, and Northumberland, killed upon the field of St. Albans, and received in return an assurance that their loyalty should not be called in question on account of the transactions of that fatal day. It was farther stipulated that the Duke of York should pay five thousand marks to the Duchess of Somerset and her children, and that Warwick should give one thousand to Lord Clifford. The Earl of Salisbury consented to relinquish the amount of the damages awarded against the Earl of Egremont for his late aggressions, upon the assurance that he would bind himself under a heavy penalty to keep the peace for the ensuing ten years.

That nothing might be wanting to render this much wished for reconciliation permanent, Henry piously determined that it should be ratified at the altar.

The celebration of the happy event drew admiring crowds together, who viewed with unaffected delight the procession, wherein enemies so lately thirsting for each other's blood seemed to be now united by concord's gentle bonds.* The king gracing the ceremony with regal pomp and splendour, walked alone, arrayed in his robes of state with the crown upon his head:† he was preceded by the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Salisbury, the Duke of Exeter and the Earl of Warwick, and a brilliant train of the chiefs of both parties, who clasped each other's hands in token of their utter forgetfulness of former

March 25, 1458.

* Hall. † Fabian.

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wrongs. Immediately behind the king came Margaret led by the Duke of York, and the pleased spectators observed that the royal lady gave approving looks and gracious words to her courtly and noble conductor.

Glittering in gold and jewels, and radiant with smiles of gladness, the sparkling pageant passed to St. Paul's; a stranger and an angel visitant, the rudest hearts welcomed the return of peace, and beheld the universal concord with joy, which breathed itself in song.* The strains of the poet called upon England to rejoice at the triumph of love and charity; but it was a fleeting vision, a dream of hope vanishing with the first angry feeling which arose in bosoms unaccustomed to more gentle guests. An unfortunate accident precipitated the breach, which nothing less than a miracle could have prevented from breaking out between people whose resentments only slumbered, whilst they endeavoured to sustain a character at variance with the turbulence of their dispositions.

The Earl of Warwick, prompted by his usual impetuosity, attacked a fleet of foreign vessels with a very inferior number; he succeeded in capturing six sail, but unable to maintain the combat from the loss of men retired into Calais. The earl's too active zeal in this instance involved him in a dispute with the merchants of Lubeck who had embarked property on board the ships; they complained of their losses to the English government, and an inquiry was instituted at Westminster, which Warwick at-

* The poem composed upon this occasion is preserved in the British Museum. *MSS. Vesb. B.* 16.

tended.* Whilst engaged at the council one of his retainers happened to quarrel with a servant belonging to the king, blows passed between them, and the latter being seriously wounded the earl's yeoman fled. The king's retainers enraged at the condition of their comrade and the escape of the offender, rushed out to avenge the wrong at the moment that the Earl of Warwick sought his barge. Assaulted with ruffian violence by men who added party spirit to their recent irritation, the earl fought his way with difficulty to the river. Rumour magnified an idle brawl into a preconcerted plot, and each party suspected the other of being the contrivers. A report reached Warwick that the queen had seized this pretext to procure his disgrace and death, and that her orders were issued for his arrest; upon these alarming tidings he hastened to Warwick, and from thence to Calais. Every shadow of confidence was now at an end, and Richard Nevill's retreat confirmed the queen in her opinion that the opportunity of renewing a contest with the crown had been purposely created.†

The Duke of York, perceiving that he must either subdue his enemies in open fight, or sink into irretrievable ruin, consulted with Salisbury and Warwick upon the expedience of appealing again to the sword. These gallant nobles readily assured him of their willingness to embark their lives and fortunes in his service. They bruited the wrongs and the pretensions of their oppressed kinsman abroad, inflamed the minds of the people by representations of his superior right to the English crown; and many

* Rymer. † Hall. Fabian. Croyland.

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who had only desired to see him triumph over the illegitimate branch of the Somersets, unjustly preferred to a prince more nobly and honourably descended, now lent their aid to place him on the throne.* It was no longer a struggle for power between ambitious nobles. York raised his eyes to a regal diadem, and the king sought to crush a dangerous rival; reconciliation had become utterly hopeless, and no peace could be effected until one of the contending parties should be levelled with the dust. Yet in thus arousing the energies of the nation, the attempt on the part of the confederates seemed almost desperate. Henry was endeared to the majority of his subjects by the amiable qualities of his pure and unsophisticated mind, the virtues of his character shone so transcendently bright that even calumny shrank from accusation. Though too easily led to uphold a set of men who misdirected his affairs, the monarch's well-known abhorrence to every thing akin to crime or to injustice, secured him from sharing in the odium which the outrages perpetrated by the queen and the favourites brought upon the government; despite of his more than doubtful title not a hand would ever have been raised against the king, had not Margaret and her council usurped the royal dignity and defied every attempt of a more popular party to dispossess them of power which they exercised with hateful tyranny.

1459. Several months elapsed before either of the adverse roses were in a condition to take the field. York mustered his followers on the Welsh border, the Earl of Salisbury raised levies at Middleham, and

* Whethamstede.

Warwick prepared to meet the two former at Kenilworth with a band of well-organized troops, the remnant of the French garrisons concentrated at Calais. The king, to whom the designs of the Yorkists had been communicated, repaired to Worcester at the head of an army of sixty thousand men, whilst the active Margaret hastened to Chester with Prince Edward, trusting that the youth and innocence of England's heir would raise the declining spirit of loyalty in the border counties. To this intent she distributed the badge of the royal boy, a silver swan, amongst the Cheshire gentlemen; and gaining intelligence of the approach of Salisbury, dispatched the Lord Audley to meet and circumvent him, with the express command that he should bring the traitor to her presence whether alive or dead. CHAP. XVII.

On the evening of the twenty-second of September, Salisbury found himself at Blore Heath near Drayton in Staffordshire, in the immediate neighbourhood of a force amounting to double his own numbers, whilst the Lord Stanley at the head of another division hovered at a short distance. Even the intrepid spirit of a Nevill would not rest upon the sword for victory in a combat so unequal; but difficulties only oppose themselves to genius to be surmounted. Salisbury had taken his station upon the banks of a deep but narrow brook, which separated him from his antagonists, and when morning revealed the disparity of his numbers, he shot a flight of arrows across the stream and commenced a retreat. Lord Audley, deceived by this movement, rushed with headlong valour on the pursuit;* half of

* Hall.

CHAP. XVII.

his men forded the river undisturbed, but before the other half could join their comrades Salisbury had turned with overpowering fury upon the astonished host.* Tradition relates that Margaret beheld from the towers of Muccleston Church the dreadful carnage of that well contested field; the Cheshire gentlemen shewed themselves worthy of the confidence which she had reposed in them; they claimed the front of the battle and perished with their leader. A stone still marks the spot where the gallant Audley fell. This distinguished Lancastrian was killed by the hand of Sir Roger Kynaston of Hordley, a service which his party rewarded by a grant of the Audley arms, which are to this day borne by his descendants in the first quarter.†

The loss on both sides amounted to two thousand men, and several nobles, knights, and gentlemen fell into the hands of Salisbury, who marched in triumph to join the Duke of York at Ludlow. Sir John and Sir Thomas Neville, two of the victor's sons, were wounded in the action, and on their return home were taken prisoners by the friends of the queen. They were however speedily rescued, for York's popularity upon the Marches, the ancient domain of the house of Mortimer, raised the common people in their defence.

The defeat at Blore Heath, though it enabled the confederates to meet, did not damp the ardour of the royalists; they pressed forward to Ludlow, encountering many difficulties from the badness of the roads, the inclemency of the weather, and the want of accommodation. Henry, who cheerfully sub-

* Pennant. † Yorke's Royal Tribes of Wales.

mitted to the unaccustomed hardships of his soldiers' life, halted only on Sundays, and often spent the night in the open fields. The rapidity of his movements brought him into the close vicinity of the opposing army in the second week of October. 1459.

York's situation was one of extreme hazard; he had endeavoured to preserve the semblance of loyalty by continued proclamations which sought to assure the people that the arms of the associates were directed against the evil councillors who misgoverned the state, and kept the extortion, rapine, and wrong which desolated the kingdom a secret from the unsuspecting monarch, into whose most gracious presence they intended to go as true subjects, to lay before him the inconveniences produced by the dissipation of the crown revenues, the impositions of the king's ministers and household, and the impunity granted to the most flagrant transgressors of the law.

Henry sent offers of grace into the hostile camp for all who should quit the insurgent banners, and promised pardon to the three leaders if they would request it within the space of six days.* The lords replied that they had already received pardons which were of no security, since the king had disgraced them in the eyes of the nobility and the people, in neither summoning them to his parliaments nor inviting them to his councils; and that the latter was composed of haughty relatives who made their own will their sole law, while Warwick had nearly lost his life in the discharge of his duty at Westminster; they concluded by entreating the king to receive this declaration as the truth, and not

* Whethamstade.

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to suffer the blessed disposition and righteous equity which God had granted him, to be biassed by the malicious importunities of those who made his royal authority a cloak to procure their destruction. No answer was returned to these remonstrances, and York who had reason to doubt the steadiness of many of his followers, stooped to an unworthy artifice to fix their wavering resolution. He pretended to receive information of the king's death, and ordered masses to be sung for his soul's repose. The report reached Henry's ears, who immediately refuted it by appearing amongst his troops and addressing them with a knightly port and martial demeanour, which no other occasion had ever elicited. York's falsehood was thus made to stand confessed; and it accelerated the defection which he dreaded.*

Sir Andrew Trollop the commander of the forces which Warwick had brought from Calais, had grown old in the king's service,† and suspecting that treasonable designs lurked beneath the fair speeches of the reformers, he drew off his veteran troops in the evening, and repairing to the royal camp tendered his allegiance to the king. Henry received him with joyful surprise, whilst his retreat spread consternation and dismay throughout the tents of the insurgents. In this painful emergence York consulted with Salisbury and Warwick; they agreed upon the impossibility of trusting to the fidelity of those who still remained, and in reluctant despair abandoned their now hopeless enterprize. In consequence of this resolution the three leaders stole

* Whethamstade. † Fabian. Hall.

away in the dead of the night. York with his youngest son took refuge in Ireland; his heir Edward Earl of March, accompanied the Nevills into Devonshire, where they obtained shelter under the roof of John Denham, a faithful partizan, who after a short concealment procured a ship which conveyed them to Guernsey, whence they sailed to Calais.

Upon the dispersion of the insurgent army, Lord Grey and Lord Powys surrendered themselves to the king. Lord Stanley who had kept aloof at the battle of Blore Heath, and had afterwards written to the Earl of Salisbury to congratulate him upon the issue of the day, was probably the third who with the Bishop of Exeter is stated to have sought grace, and obtained pardon from a monarch who delighted in deeds of mercy.

The town and castle of Ludlow became the spoil of the triumphant army. The Duchess of York and her two youngest sons were taken prisoners, but the lady was treated with the deference due to her rank and sex, and committed to the friendly custody of her sister the Duchess of Buckingham.*

Margaret assembled a parliament at Coventry, a place where her influence entirely prevailed, and styled by the enemies to her government "the queen's secret arbour;"† the members returned were wholly devoted to her interest, and she was afterwards charged with having procured their election by an illegal stretch of power. The proceedings were marked by a ruthless severity which was fatally imitated by the House of York. The estates of the nobles who had fled were confiscated, and the brand

* Hearn. † Fabian.

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of traitor cast upon their names; their children were also attainted, together with the Countess of Salisbury, who was accused of having councilled and abetted her kinsman's designs, and the Lord Clinton, Lord Powys, and a long list of knights and esquires.

Henry warmly advocated a milder system, insisting upon the insertion of a clause which would enable him to extend the royal clemency in the reversal of the act of attainder at his own pleasure. Neither would he consent to the confiscation of the estates of the Lord Powys, who had solicited his mercy on the morning after the retreat of York.*

* Parliament Rolls.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ascendance of the Lancastrians—Triumph of Warwick—his Naval Exploits—Capture of the Wydevilles—their Reception at Calais—Enterprize of a Knight—Warwick sails to Dublin—Oppression of the Yorkists—The Commons fly to Arms—their alleged Grievances—The Queen's Unpopularity—Warwick's Invasion—he enters London—A grand Council—Co-operation of the Clergy—Warwick demands an Interview with the King—Activity of Margaret—A Traitor in the Camp—The Yorkists march through the Barriers—Defeat of the Lancastrians—Slaughter of the Nobles—Character of Buckingham—Diminution of the King's Party—Perils encountered by Margaret—Warwick's respectful Demeanour—Rejoicings of the Citizens—Death of Lord Scales—A new Parliament—York's Delay—he enters London—his Disappointment—he claims the Crown—Henry's Reply—Deliberations in Parliament—Henry's Title—The Pretensions of York—Decision of the Peers—Thanksgivings at St. Paul's—Division of the Kingdom—Margaret's prompt Measures—York marches to the North—Somerset's Defiance—York's Impetuosity—Battle of Wakefield—Defeat of the Yorkists—Inhumanity of the Conquerors—Edward's Intrepidity—Battle of Mortimer's Cross—Barbarous Executions—The Queen's March to London—Warwick's rash Valour—Second Battle of St. Albans—Flight of the Yorkists—Re-union of Henry with his Queen—Death of Sir Thomas Gray—Plunder of St. Albans—Condemnation of the Yorkists—Bonvill's Ingratitude—Conduct of the Northern Army—Animosity of the Citizens—Margaret's Retreat.

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THE queen now reigned more absolutely than ever, her favourites were promoted to the highest offices in the realm. The Earl of Northumberland

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and Lord Clifford were appointed to command in the North, the government of Calais was given to the Duke of Somerset, and the Duke of Exeter was intrusted with the custody of the sea.

The hopes of the white rose seemed to have utterly withered, but they faded only to display the strength, the intrepidity, and the resources of the Earl of Warwick, whose name alone supported the defeated and scattered party of the house of York. In possession of Calais, where admitted by Lord Fauconberg through a postern gate he was received with those acclamations of joy which universally hailed his approach, he defied the fleet of Somerset who arrived too late to cut off his retreat; nor in the extreme depression of his fortunes was he forgotten in England; the princely munificence of his disposition, his reckless valour, profuse generosity and open board had raised him to such high estimation, that Hall informs us that "the common people judged him to be able to do all things, and without him nothing to be well done." Though the hearth was cold where six oxen had been roasted for a breakfast,* and the taverns in the neighbourhood of his residence in London no longer filled with the overflowings of his abundant larder, the boundless hospitality of that liberal household was still remembered to his honour, and this extensive popularity, amounting at length to a species of idolatry, sus-

* Stow tells us that at the Earl of Warwick's house in London, there were often six oxen eaten at a breakfast, "and every taverne was full of his meate; for he that had any acquaintance in that house might have there so much of sodden and rost meate as he could pricke and carry upon a long dagger." Thirty thousand casual guests besides numerous tenants, are said each day to have been fedby this munificent earl.

tained him through the most adverse circumstances of his life, and when a better prospect dawned crowded his ranks with enthusiastic multitudes who crowned and dethroned monarchs at his pleasure.

Somerset appeared before Calais only to be discomfited; the earl's artillery obliged him to retreat to Guisnes, where the sailors under his command deserted his standard and carried off the ships to the triumphant Nevill. Warwick made a prompt advantage of the fleet so fortunately acquired; he sent it under the command of Denham to Sandwich to surprise an armament fitting out in that port under the Lord Rivers. This daring enterprise was eminently successful; the chivalric band landed, seized the royalists in their beds, and carrying off the ships, conveyed their prisoners to Calais. Upon this occasion all knightly courtesy was lost in the bitterness of resentment; the captives were the Wydevilles, at this time strongly attached to the Lancastrians in consequence of the marriage of the father with Jacqueline dowager Duchess of Bedford. The conduct of the haughty barons into whose hands they had now fallen affords a curious illustration of the fierce manners of the age. Brought by the light of eight score torches into the presence of their enemies, they were assailed with a torrent of invective.* Salisbury heaped opprobrious epithets upon Lord Rivers, calling him "knave's son," and retorting the word "traitor" which provoked his ire, roughly rebuked his rudeness for daring to apply the term to the faithful liegemen of the true king. Warwick attacked the Lancastrian with language equally coarse and

* Fenn's Collection, vol. ii.

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intemperate, scornfully adverting to the meanness of his lineage, the late advancement of a family descended from a squire; and, boasting of the regal blood which flowed in his own viens, told him that it was not his part to speak of noblemen as he had done. The earl of March who was present, unconscious that he saw his father and brother-in-law in the gentlemen thus unceremoniously treated, "rated him in likewise," and the accomplished Sir Anthony Wydeville, afterwards so highly distinguished for his valour and his learning, also sustained the united abuse of the enraged triumvirate.'

It was in vain that the English government sent out forces against the politic and fortunate Warwick. A second expedition, prepared at Sandwich to aid Somerset in a projected assault upon Calais, was defeated by the earl's navy; and the Lord Audley, driven by stress of weather to the fortress so proudly and fearlessly maintained, was added with his squadron to the list of captures. The most romantic period of England's history does not present a more striking instance of determined resistance in a subject than that afforded by the bold exile, who from his tower of refuge on a foreign shore bade defiance to a whole kingdom, and swept the seas with insulting impunity. The spirit of the times led many ambitious knights to offer their services to the queen in the reduction of so insolent an enemy. Sir Baldwin Fulford we are told undertook the earl's destruction upon pain of losing his head,* but he returned from a bootless expedition after having squandered one thousand marks of the king's

* Fabian.

money in the futile attempt. The Duke of Exeter was equally unsuccessful. In the command of a powerful fleet he had the mortification to see the adventurous Warwick sail unmolested under his own arrows from Dublin to Calais, whither his daring temper had led him in order to consult in person with the Duke of York. Not a mariner would raise his hand against the object of national attachment. CHAP. XVIII.

Margaret disdained the lesson which these signs of disaffection should have taught. Unfitted to rule over a free people, she strove to bend the stubborn necks of Englishmen to a yoke they would not bear. The followers of the confederated lords were visited with great severity, and the executions and confiscations which took place at Newberry* a town chiefly belonging to the Duke of York, raised the indignation of the people of Kent and incited them to rebellion. The fugitives were invited to return, receiving at the same time assurances of warm and ready support.

The commons in arming themselves for the preservation of the national privileges, disclaimed all evil intentions against their sovereign. They separated him entirely from the ministers who were the cause of the grievances of which they complained, representing themselves as his true friends,† inasmuch as they desired only to clear his councils of those traitors to him and to their country, who subverted the laws at their will,‡ asserting contrary to the coronation oath, that the king's pleasure should

* The Earl of Wiltshire, Lord Seales, and Lord Hungerford were the chief reformers in the cruel inquisition held at Newberry upon the adherents of the Duke of York.—*Dugdale.*

† See the articles of the Kentish Men. ‡ Harleian MSS. No. 543.

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be the sole guide of his administration. They drew a lively picture of the disgrace and desolation brought upon the kingdom by the long course of misgovernment to which it had reluctantly submitted; and finished by declaring that they did not include "all the lords about the king's person, nor all gentlemen, nor all men of law, nor all bishops, nor all priests," in their censure; but only such as by a fair trial should be found guilty of the crimes alleged against them.

We must pity whilst we condemn the misguided Margaret. She was most unfortunate in her friends: impatient of control she grasped at absolute power and found a band of greedy aspirants ready to flatter her into the belief that it might be maintained by force. The errors into which she plunged disgusted the nation, and gave the Duke of York a degree of importance in the public eye which he could not otherwise have obtained, while his dormant, yet alarming pretensions deterred a proud and jealous woman from availing herself of talents and popularity which she had some reason to fear would be exerted to the prejudice of the king. Had the queen's party secured the good will of the country by a just and liberal government, they might have excluded the Duke of York from their councils without danger; but in pursuing their obstinate and ruinous system they renewed the discontents of the æra of Richard II. and obliged the people to seek a leader who would free them from the intolerable oppression under which they laboured.

1460. June.

Warwick, accompanied by the Earl of Salisbury, Edward Earl of March and a train of fifteen hun-

dred men, landed in England without awaiting the arrival of the Duke of York, and he had not deceived himself in trusting to the attachment of his countrymen. The gentlemen of Kent flocked to the earl's standard; the Lord Cobham joined him with four hundred followers, and the Archbishop of Canterbury lent the sanction of his presence to the enterprise, and in this manner the army of the invaders was augmented to forty thousand men before it reached the capital, where the mayor and aldermen opened the gates in defiance of Lord Seales, who prevented from defending the city withdrew to the tower, while the lords at a convocation assembled at St. Paul's, declared that they had returned to England for the purpose of effecting the deliverance of the king from the power of a faction by whom he was detained, in captivity dishonourable to himself and destructive to the national interests.*

Five of the bishops were prevailed upon to espouse the cause and to usher Warwick to the foot of his sovereign's throne, in order that he might unfold to him the calamitous situation of his affairs through the wilful misconduct of unworthy councillors. Leaving the care of the metropolis to the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Cobham, Warwick and the Earl of March advanced towards Coventry, determined to force themselves into the king's presence. The Bishop of Salisbury, at the suggestion of his mitred brethren, speeded forward to the king, charged with an entreaty that he would prevent the direful consequences of civil war by an amicable adjustment with the insurgents; but Henry, if inclined to

* Whethamstede.

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grant the petition, was not a free agent. Surrounded by nobles who confidently trusted to the issue of a battle, he refused an audience to the ambassador, and all hope of peaceful negotiation was at an end.*

Margaret, whose courage at least must demand our admiration, shewed herself to the soldiers, and urged them in a spirited address to fight valiantly for their king and prince. She had quitted Coventry, and passing the river Nene, the lords of her party carefully entrenched themselves in a field between Harryngton and Sandifford. Their position was strong, and might have been ably defended had not treachery lurked within the camp. It was, we are told the abominable thirst for lucre which tempted the Lord Grey of Ruthyn to betray the trust reposed in him by the party whom he feigned to serve.†

* Whethamstede.

† Dugdale and other writers aver that the Lord Grey pretending a title to Ampethill, the lands of Lord Fanhope a loyal partizan of Henry VI. negotiated with the Earl of March before the battle: offering upon the promise of this estate to go over with his "strong band of Welschemen" to the assailants. Pennant disputes the story, observing that Ampethill was not granted to Lord Grey until seventeen years after Lord Fanhope's death; but the unsettled state of public affairs might have delayed the performance of Edward's engagements; the fact of Lord Grey's mercenary disposition receives strong corroboration from the Paston letters. In endeavouring to accomplish an alliance between a young gentleman, his ward, and a sister of John Paston, he appears to have been entirely influenced by the hope of engrossing the whole of the lady's portion. The bridegroom however was not content to relinquish the property in his guardian's favour. Lord Grey's speech on the occasion, as reported by a lawyer to one of the family, is curious:—"400 marks would do me ease, and now he would have his marriage money himself; and therefore, quoth he, he shall marry himself for me."—*Fenn's Coll.* 43, p. 220. Locking cautiously to his own interests, Lord Grey continued to retain both life and land through four stormy reigns, and "to keep well with Edward IV., Richard III. and Henry VII."

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July. 10. 1460.

The enemy advanced to attack the royal camp in three distinct columns, the first led by young Edward, the second by Warwick, and the third by Fauconberg; they rushed to the assault with their usual impetuosity, but their attempts on the outworks which had been thrown up with considerable skill, were for a time baffled by the steepness of the rampart, and the sharp stakes planted in the ditch below.* At this critical period the traitor Grey surrendered his post to the invaders. Warwick assisted by his new allies gained the summit of the entrenchment, and followed by Edward Plantagenet bearing his father's banner, burst into the camp.† The royalists though sold into the enemy's hands made a vigorous resistance, and for the space of two hours endeavoured to retrieve the fortunes of the day; but, beaten back, discomfited on all sides, and forced upon the edge of the stream swollen by heavy rains, a total rout ensued, and the survivors of the sword and the flood sought only to save themselves by flight. Amid the most distinguished of the slain was the Duke of Buckingham, Talbot Shrewsbury's gallant son, and the Lords Egremont and Beaumont.

Henry lost a steady friend and potent ally in the Duke of Buckingham, who was nearly connected with the royal family, being the son of Anne, daughter of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, and had been advanced to his dukedom by the favour of Henry. Though serving the House of Lancaster very faithfully with his sword his proud tyrannical disposition and rapacious spirit assisted to

* Whethamstede. † Hall.

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bring the government of Henry into disrepute. Tenacious of his high birth he refused to give place to Henry Beauchamp Duke of Warwick, to whom the king had granted precedence, and such violent animosities broke out in consequence between these haughty peers that an especial act of parliament was framed to appease their differences.* It was enacted that the contending dukes should enjoy the coveted privilege alternately for the space of a year, the survivor during his life to have the precedence of the other's heir, and the prerogative to rest finally with that heir who should first obtain livery of his lands. The death of the Duke of Warwick without issue more effectually settled this nice point, and the Duke of Buckingham immediately obtained a grant of precedence to himself and to his heirs, "above all dukes whatsoever, whether of England or of France," excepting those of the blood royal. Nor did he covet rank alone: there is a dark record extant of a baser avarice, in the imprisonment of two gentlemen, whom he kept in durance until they signed away their right to an inheritance which the duke divided with a younger brother of the family.† "It is no marvel," adds our author, "that the injured heir became a partizan of the House of York."

It appears that Sir William Mountford, a wealthy knight, executed an unjust will to the exclusion of his three eldest sons, in favour of their younger brother by a second marriage: and aware that the heirs would not be easily deprived of their inheritance, gave the Duke of Buckingham (a potent man,

* Dugdale. † Dugdale.

observes our author, in that age), an interest in defending it, by bequeathing the property in his charge for the use of his wife and her son, with the reversion to the Duke in case of the boy's death without issue. Sir Baldwyn, the elder, advanced his claim at his father's death, and was immediately exposed to the persecution of the rapacious duke.* Closely confined in Coventry, whilst his son was also a prisoner at Gloucester, they at length agreed to relinquish their title: but upon the death of this nobleman Sir Baldwyn openly published the oppressive grievances which he had sustained; in a manifesto addressed "To all true Cristen pepull," he declares that he was compelled to release his right to the family estate, "or als my seid son should never have comen out of prison, nor y should not have abidden in my country, but to have had and to have stouden in the indignacion of the lordship of the said duke, and other lords above rehersed, which in those dayes had byn too hevy and too importable for me and my seid son to have boren."

Delegating according to the convenient custom of the day, his spiritual concerns to others, the duke left the poor to pray for his soul's repose, rating his salvation at the price of two hundred marks. The obligations to morality were slight when the offences of a long life were supposed to be wiped off by the foundation of a chantry or the support of additional canons to religious houses.

Percy Lord Egremont, a true scion of the fiery-hearted Northumberlands, whose deadly hostility to his border neighbours, the Nevills, has been re-

* Dugdale.

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ferred to as the origin of the savage warfare which afterwards became common between dissentient nobles, too strongly identified with the adverse party ever to have supported the pretensions of the Duke of York, was a heavy loss to the House of Lancaster. Henry was also deprived of steady friends in the Lords Talbot and Beaumont, both had shewn undeviating gratitude for the favours which they had received from their liberal sovereign's hands. The latter had served him long and faithfully, and was remarkable in being the first English nobleman who received the title of viscount.

The Duke of Somerset fled from the field in haste, and Margaret, whom it is most pleasing to contemplate in the maternal character, anxiously provided for the safety of her son and bore him away with her to Wales. The unhappy fugitives experienced numberless disasters in their flight, robbed by their own servants, and narrowly escaping capture by a retainer of the Lord Stanley, it was with infinite difficulty that they obtained a temporary asylum in Wales from whence they proceeded to Scotland.

The king, left desolate and forlorn in his tent, received from the victors the reverence due to his rank and virtues. Kneeling at his feet, they renewed their assurances of loyalty, and conducted him into the town with every testimonial of the most profound respect. Nor was there any diminution in duty or service during his subsequent journey to the metropolis.* Henry entered London attended with all the attributes of sovereignty. Warwick rode before him bare-headed, carrying the sword of state,

* Stow.

and the procession was greeted with joyful acclamations by all ranks and classes as it passed along. CHAP. XVIII.

The presence of the Earl of Salisbury and the hostility of the citizens had kept Lord Seales a prisoner in the Tower, where we are told "he was in a manner besieged." Provoked to retaliate, he fired upon his assailants.* The first shot unfortunately killed a young woman; this accident increased the indignation of the Londoners, and upon the arrival of the triumphant party, he was compelled to seek safety in flight from the fury of the people. The fugitive was already on the river, but recognized by some watermen attached to the Earl of Warwick, they plunged their daggers into his body, and flung the bleeding corpse on the opposite bank: it was found naked and neglected near the porch of St. Mary Overies,† but received honourable interment by the order of the victors.

Easily influenced by the party, whoever they might be, who had the custody of his person, Henry readily assented to the measures of the new administration. The proceedings of the late parliament being particularly distasteful to the persons now in power, they prevailed upon the king to order the issue of new writs, and questioning the legality of the former elections, hastened to repeal all the acts which had been passed in the last session.‡

Three months elapsed after the battle of Northampton before the Duke of York arrived in England. By this long meditation ere he could resolve to prefer his claim to the crown at a period when the king was in the hands of his party, and himself the che-

* Fabian. † William of Wyrcestre. ‡ Parliament Rolls.

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rished object of national expectation, the hope and trust of all who desired to see a reformation in the state, he evinced his reluctance to violate the repeated oaths of allegiance which he had sworn to the House of Lancaster. But however irresolute, scarcely a choice was left him. He had already experienced the queen's spirited and persevering enmity in the loss of every advantage gained by the battle of St. Albans, and whilst she lived to connect the faction whom he had now defeated with the king, he could not hope to maintain any elevation below the throne. Determined at length to appeal to the rights which had been suffered to slumber for so many years, the duke quitted Ireland, and entered the metropolis with all the pomp and circumstance of regal dignity.* A sword borne naked before him, and the blast of trumpets announcing his approach, Richard of York proceeded straight to the House of Peers where the lords were sitting in assembly; yet still anxious for encouragement he ventured only to hint his wishes by placing his hand upon the throne. A dead silence ensued, the nobles unprepared for this movement stood mute, nor by a word or sign manifested the slightest token of approbation. The Duke, somewhat disconcerted, withdrew his hand, and immediately a burst of plaudits arose in the circle around him; nor did the display of feeling end here; for the archbishop of Canterbury boldly inquired, whether he would not repair to the Queen's Palace to visit the king.† York indignantly replied, that he knew of no one in the kingdom who ought not rather to come to him, and hastily retiring took

1460. Oct.

* Whethamstede.

† Whethamstede.

up his abode in the royal apartments hitherto held sacred to the sovereign of England.

The Duke's demeanour excited surprise and consternation, for neither lords nor commons were inclined to depose their inoffensive monarch. Anxious only for a better system of government, they had supported the Duke of York in the hope that he would have been content with a share in the administration, and all ranks we are informed by Whethamstede began to murmur at the ambitious views which he now disclosed; but the die was cast; he had advanced too far to recede; and in a written document which he presented to the chancellor, he formally stated his claims to the throne, deriving his title from Lionel Duke of Clarence, the elder brother of John of Ghent, whence the present monarch was descended.

The lords, astonished and perplexed by this novel case, when called upon for an answer, said that though they consented to receive the duke's petition, they could not make any reply without first consulting the king. Henry, with his usual patience, directed his council to search into the legality of his rival's pretensions. He observed, that his father and grandfather had been kings, that he had worn the crown forty years from his cradle, received the oath of fealty from the sons of those who had sworn allegiance to his fathers, and therefore could not imagine how his title could be disputed.* The nobles, anxious to escape from the invidious discussion, sent for the judges and desired that they would decide. They excused themselves, saying

* Blackm. 305.

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that they could only be required to pass a judgment upon points of law, and were not competent to act as council in matters of such high importance, which should rather be left to Parliament and the lords of the king's blood. No one seemed inclined to undertake the cause. Henry's attornies would gladly have withdrawn from the responsibility; but by the duties of their office they were compelled to plead in the king's behalf, and the defence of his claim was committed to their hands. Henry's advocates contended, that the oath of allegiance which the reigning monarch had received from the Duke of York and the assembled peers, was in itself a sufficient proof of the justice of his claim; that moreover he held the throne by the acts of divers Parliaments, whose acknowledgments of the right of his progenitors was of "authority to defeat any manner of title;" and by the several entails which had been made of the crown to the heirs male to the prejudice of the descent by females.* To the Duke of York they objected, that he did not bear the arms of Lionel third son of Edward III. but those of Edmund the younger brother of John of Ghent, from whom he derived his dukedom; and finally they pleaded the declaration of Henry IV. who had succeeded to the throne of England in quality of true heir of Henry III. and by the undoubted right of conquest. The duke's council denied the right of parliament to set aside priority of descent, either by election or entail; neither would they admit that Richard Plantagenet had made a voluntary concession of his title by taking the oath of allegiance, an

* Parliament Rolls.

act which his own personal safety demanded.* In abstaining from quartering the arms of Lionel Duke of Clarence with his own, they maintained that he had only avoided the manifest danger to which he would have been exposed by so open an avowal of his pretensions; and with respect to the declaration of Henry IV. it was so perfectly false that it would not bear the slightest examination and therefore must be instantly dismissed.†

The deliberations which followed in the house of peers were of a much more temperate nature than might have been expected from the character of the parties and the subject under discussion. Each member seems to have exerted the privilege (not always conceded) of freedom of speech in the debate; and York's friends resting entirely upon the merits of their cause made no attempt to carry it by force. The lords at length agreed that Richard Plantagenet possessed the legal title to the crown; but bound by their oaths of allegiance to the reigning monarch, they could not resolve to violate those solemn assurances of fealty which they had so often made, and recommended the Duke of York to wave his claim during the life of the king, and to rest satisfied with the reversion of the crown after

* Parliament Rolls.

† "Whilst he, the Duke of York, was thus declaring his title in the chambre of the peres, there happened a straunge chaunce, in the very same time amongst the commons in the nether house, then there assembled; for a crowne which did hang in the meddal of the same, to garnish a branch to set lights upon, without touch of any creature, or rigor of wynd, sodeinly fell doune, and at the same time fell doune the crowne, which stode upon the top of the castle of Dover; as a signe and prognosticacion that the crowne of the realm should be divided and changed from one line to another. This was the judgment of the common people."—*Hall.*

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Henry's decease. Both parties consented to this arrangement: Henry at once sacrificing the interests of his son for the doubtful hope of present tranquillity; and Richard, who being two years older than the king, could only flatter himself with a remote chance of succeeding to the throne, relinquishing his own expectations in favour of his descendants. Though so lately pleading against the sanctity of an oath prompted merely by convenience, the duke was again permitted to prove his sincerity by the same weak testimony. He, together with his two sons the Earls of March and Rutland, swore to attempt nothing against the king's life, and to devote themselves faithfully to his service. In return, Henry recognized the Duke of York as heir apparent, and in a second procession they repaired to St. Paul's to return thanks for the amicable adjustment of their differences. On this occasion the king wore his crown, the duke taking the second place as the declared successor; nor was it until this station was assigned to him that he condescended to visit the sovereign, haughtily affirming that he was subject to none save the Deity, who was his sole superior.*

Henry's tame abandonment of his son's hopes availed the conquering party but little, whilst Margaret's heroic spirit maintained the struggle for the house of Lancaster. The whole nation was now divided, the poorest and the meanest participating in the political animosity which had so long raged in the breasts of the nobles. The badge of each rival party was assumed throughout the kingdom by the favourers of Richard and of Henry; even in the

* Parliament Rolls. Hall. Fabian.

smallest villages the rustics manifested their rancorous hostility by braving each other with the white and the red rose worn in their caps as a signal of defiance; the disunion penetrated into the bosoms of private families, brethren hitherto living in concord became at variance, and the son was not unfrequently in arms against his father.

The queen, whose unremitting exertions in a failing cause must ever redound to her honour, assembled her friends in the north; she was joined by the Duke of Somerset, the Earls of Devon, Northumberland, and Wilts, and Lord Clifford.* This formidable conjunction obliged the Duke of York to leave the capital, accompanied by the Earl of Salisbury and his second son the unfortunate Rutland; he hastened to Sandal Castle, a strong post which he reached on the twenty-first of December, while his heir the Earl of March followed more at leisure with fresh supplies. Richard's army consisted only of six thousand men, those of his enemies amounted to treble the number. 1460.

Somerset anxious to engage before young Edward and his succours should come up, approached the castle where the duke lay entrenched, and tried to provoke him with bitter taunts to quit the shelter of its walls: thus braved, York against the advice of his faithful knight Sir David Hall† rashly determined to hazard a battle. To the earnest remonstrances of his trusty counsellor he replied, that as he had never kept a fortress in Normandy, but issued forth and combated with his enemies, so now he would fight though he engaged singly in the field.‡ Courage and

* William of Wyrchester. † Hall. ‡ Hall.

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caution had hitherto been the duke's characteristics, but disregarding the lessons of a long military experience he rushed against fearful odds to battle rather than submit to be kept in check by a woman.* Salisbury cheerfully followed, and the contending parties agreed to meet in a plain near Wakefield.† For this purpose York drew up his troops in the neighbourhood. The queen's friends perceiving that an advantage might be gained by surprising the enemy before the appointed day, violated the strict laws of chivalry by commencing the attack at a period when part of the duke's small army were absent in search of forage.‡ York might still have gained the security of his castle, but with fatal impetuosity he threw himself on the main body headed by the Duke of Somerset, and was instantly hemmed in on all sides by the columns under the Earl of Wilts and Lord Clifford. A horrid scene of carnage commenced: York's desperate and unyielding courage availed not in the unequal conflict, in the short space of half an hour two thousand eight hundred of his followers were slain, and he and Salisbury covered with wounds had fallen into the hands of their remorseless assailants. The victors sullied their triumph by outrages appalling to humanity. Perceiving the fate of the day, the tutor of young Rutland led his pupil, an interesting boy of twelve years old, out of the field in the hope of conveying him to a place of safety.§ Clifford hot from recent slaughter encountered the fugitives on the bridge, and demanding the name of the younger whose rich dress betrayed his rank,‖ the terrified youth fell upon his

Dec 30. 1460.

* Hall. † Whethamstede. ‡ William of Wyrcestre. § Grafton. ‖ Hall.

knees, and casting up his swimming eyes, made a silent appeal to the conqueror's mercy. "Save him," cried the attendant priest, "he is the son of a prince, and may do you good hereafter:" but the savage Clifford boasting that he had sworn destruction to the line of York, buried his dagger in the trembling suppliant's heart; and bidding the dismayed ecclesiastic carry the news to the boy's mother, surpassed even the cold-blooded murder by the barbarity of the message.*

Authors differ respecting the fate of York.† Whethamstede affirms that he was taken prisoner alive, and his dying moments insulted by the brutal derision of his enemies, who placing him on an ant-hill as on a throne, twisted a crown of grass around his temples, and hailed him, in scorn, "King without a kingdom, prince without a people." Others say that he was killed in the action; but all agree in describing the horrid mockery with which the adverse party exulted, either over his captive person or his cold remains. The reeking head borne upon a pole was brought before the queen by Clifford. "Madam," he exclaimed, "your war is done, here is the ransom of your king." The ruthless Margaret, disgracing her sex and rank, laughed at the fearful spectacle; henceforward she combated with an enemy not less sanguinary than herself; and York who had never stained his victories by any act of wanton cruelty, was amply revenged by his ferocious son.‡ Crowned with a paper diadem the duke's

* Lord Clifford at the battle of Wakefield fighting for Henry VI. is reported to have made so great a slaughter with his own hands that he was thenceforth called "the Butcher."—*Dugdale.*

† Whethamstede, 439. ‡ Hall.

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head was placed by the queen's order on the gate of York, together with that of Salisbury and other prisoners beheaded at Pontefract.*

The disastrous news of his father's defeat and death was received by young Edward with undismayed fortitude. Bent upon retrieving the misfortunes which the duke's rashness had occasioned, he summoned his friends to the field, and was speedily surrounded by an army of borderers, the ancient vassals of the House of Mortimer.

Strongly and gratefully attached to the Lancastrian family, Owen Tudor, with his son, the Earl of Pembroke, instantly joined the Earl of Wiltshire with a mixed force of Irish and Welsh; and though greatly inferior in numbers hazarded a battle with the young prince following closely upon his rear. Edward unwilling to have two armies to encounter at once, turned round, and falling upon the royalists at Mortimer's-cross, dispersed and cut them to pieces with the loss of four thousand men left dead upon the field. The Earl of Wiltshire, a nobleman aways amongst the list of fugitives, made an early retreat. Pembroke also reserving himself for a better day was fortunate enough to escape; but Owen Tudor, captured by the enemy, became the first victim of Edward's unappeasable thirst for vengeance. The bold Welchman lost his head at Hereford with seven of his captains.†

Feb. 1. 1461.

* Stow informs us that the Earl of Salisbury being taken prisoner, was led by the Duke of Somerset to Pontefract Castle, and had his life granted for a great ransom: but the common people of the country who loved him not, took him out of the castle by violence and struck off his head. Hall and others state that he was executed by the queen's order.

†William of Wyrcestre.

The queen in the interim was advancing towards London scattering desolation in her path: the wild horde of northern adventurers who followed her banner claimed the privilege of plunder as their reward. Nothing was sacred to these unhallowed depredators; they perpetrated their robberies at the foot of the altar, their march (says our chronicler) more resembling the invasion of Saracens than the progress of a christian army.*

Warwick and the Duke of Norfolk trusting entirely to their courage and good fortune, imitated the Duke of York's imprudence instead of taking warning by his fate, and rushing out of London with an inadequate equipment, opposed themselves to the rude multitude attached to the queen. They obliged Henry to accompany them, and planted his banner at St. Albans. Margaret's troops consisting of twenty-four thousand men, and led by the Dukes of Exeter and Somerset, the Earls of Devonshire, Shrewsbury, and Northumberland, attacked the Yorkists: repulsed at the great cross by the steady valour of the archers, they fell back from this point, but making a new attempt in another quarter gained entrance through a narrow alley into Peter-street, where the battle re-commenced.† The Yorkists now gave way and were forced upon the heath; Warwick, better calculated to fight in the ranks in execution of the designs of others, than to direct as a leader, allowed his army to be broken and dispersed; though hotly contesting the field; mere personal gallantry could not supply the deficiency of military skill; the approach of night found the Earl's troops completely

Feb. 17. 1461.

* Fabian. † William of Wyrcestre. Whethamstede.

CHAP. XVIII.

beaten, and happy to escape under its friendly veil they fled on all sides.

Henry's undisguised anxiety for the success of the queen and her friends, it is said, dispirited the surrounding nobles, they quitted him in anger; deserted also by the royal guard he was left, as some affirm, standing alone without a single remnant of external pomp. Others aver that he prevailed upon Lord Bonvile and Sir Thomas Kyriel to remain with him in this extremity under a promise of protection, a promise afterwards cruelly violated by the ferocious band who gratified their own savage propensities at the expense of their monarch's honour. Henry was conducted by the victors to Lord Clifford's tent where he soon experienced the transport of a re-union with his wife and son. Margaret brought the young prince then seven years old to the delighted father, who drawing his sword knighted the infant warrior.

The only person of any note who fell on the side of the royalists was Sir Thomas Grey, the husband of Lady Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Rivers. The death of this gentleman was the remote cause of infinite mischief to the House of York, and could Margaret have looked into the book of fate she might have been half consoled for the calamities which befel her own race in the miseries awaiting the descendants of her enemy.

Henry, always a mere cipher, had not the power to preserve the town of St. Albans from pillage; he would gladly have complied with the abbot's prayer who humbly solicited the king's interference, but was unable to controul the fierce spirits of the north,

loud in their demand of their promised booty, the plunder of all places beyond the Trent.

This was the third destructive battle fought within two months, "a circumstance," observes Camden, "almost unparalleled in any one civil war." The Lord Bonvile and Sir Thomas Kyriel were dragged to the scaffold by the orders of the vindictive queen; if Henry had granted them an assurance of pardon it availed nothing; the cruel law of retaliation was strictly enforced, and the prisoners suffered in consequence of the executions at Hereford, a massacre provoked by Margaret's fatal revenge upon Salisbury and York.

Lord Bonvile has been before mentioned as the inveterate enemy of the Earl of Devonshire, who laid siege to him in his castle at Taunton, the latter at that time a friend of the Duke of York, was involved in a charge of high treason by Margaret's party in consequence of this feud; and yet we find at the breaking out of the civil wars the Earl of Devonshire invariably attached to the House of Lancaster, while Lord Bonvile, who owed all his titles and honours to the favour of Henry, was as constantly fighting in the ranks of the enemy. Retributive justice visited his ingratitude with signal punishment; he saw the only male descendants of his race, his son and grandson, perish at the battle of Wakefield; and when the advance of age promised a quiet termination of his own existence, its swift progress was anticipated by a violent doom: and laying his grey hairs upon the block, he died untimely by the hand of the executioner.

The capital was now defenceless, and the imme-

CHAP. XVIII.

diate entrance of Henry and his army might have defeated young Edward's hopes for ever; but the lawless insubordination of the northern spoilers presented a strong obstacle to this judicious movement; ravaging the country in search of plunder, and reckless of every other interest, seeking only to enrich themselves, they refused to march forward whilst any booty remained. There would have been also great danger of a general insurrection had these banditti been let loose upon the metropolis, and during the hesitation of the royalists, who paused either through fear of provoking the citizens or from the difficulty of collecting their wandering bands, Edward, whose victorious army had been strengthened by Warwick's flying troops, seized the propitious moment and advanced towards London.

The populace evinced their hostility to the queen by cutting off her supplies; they resolutely opposed the departure of a convoy of provisions destined for her camp, which they stopped at Cripplegate,* and fiercely assaulted a party of the northern horsemen, who ventured to carry their predatory warfare to the surburbs of the capital.

The mayor and principal citizens apprehensive of incurring the weight of Margaret's anger should the House of Lancaster ultimately prevail, sent the recorder together with a deputation of ladies, the Duchesses of Bedford and Buckingham, and the Lady Scales, to explain the cause of the disobedience to her commands, which they imputed to the

* Hall.

fears entertained by the lower orders of the undisciplined soldiery. CHAP. XVIII.

Unwilling to abandon the hope of securing London, the council of the royalists agreed to dispatch a strong detachment, accompanied by several lords,* and to be escorted by a selected number of aldermen, appointed to meet them at Barnet for the purpose of sounding the dispositions of the people. But the news of the victory at Mortimer's-cross, and the rapid progress of the combined armies of Edward and Warwick spread so much consternation throughout the queen's party that they relinquished their design. All the south appeared ready to take up arms against them. Not daring to trust the issue of a battle, they determined to retrace their steps, and falling back left the metropolis open to more adventurous spirits.

* Hall.

CHAPTER XIX.

Reception of Edward—Muster in St. John's Field—The Bishop of Exeter's Oration—Election of Edward—he is proclaimed King—Edward's Ferocity—Amount of Margaret's Army—Edward's Station—Skirmish at Ferrybridge—Death of Lord Fitzwalter—Panic in the Army—Defeat and Death of Clifford—Edward's Sanguinary Measures—Battle of Totton—Edward's Military Talents—Dreadful Loss on the Lancastrian part—Miseries of their Retreat—Flight of the Royal Family—Execution of the Lancastrians—Fate of Clifford's Son—Rejoicings in London—Edward's triumph—his Coronation—The Lancastrians attainted—Execution of the Earl of Oxford—Proceedings of the Parliament—Honours conferred on the Yorkists—Edward's Speech—his Popularity—Distresses of the Lancastrians—Hungerford's Letter—Margaret's Fortitude—Disappointment of her Hopes—her Losses at Sea—Siege of three Castles—The Lancastrians Capitulate—Desertion of Somerset—Exploit of Lord Hungerford—Miserable Situation of Margaret—her Adventure in a Forest—Forlorn State of Henry—Generosity of Count Charolois—Unsettled State of the Kingdom—Reanimation of the Lancastrian Party.

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Feb. 25, 1461.

No period could have been more auspicious for the arrival of Edward Plantagenet: the dreadful excesses of the queen's army had inspired every portion of the community with disgust and horror. The clergy, so long the support of the house of Lancaster, found themselves exposed to the sacrilegious depredations of impious men, and looked forward to a change in the dynasty for the security of their

possessions and privileges. Sympathizing in the melancholy fate of his brave father, confiding in the military talents which the brilliant victory achieved at Mortimer's Cross had developed, and fascinated by the beauty of his person, the demonstrations of affection which greeted the youthful conqueror from surrounding multitudes, assured him that he might realize the boldest flight of his ambition.

The capital was filled with strangers* swarming out of the neighbouring counties to gaze upon a young and gallant prince, esteemed for his personal accomplishments the flower of English chivalry; and whilst this enthusiasm was at its height, the Lord Falconberg, a steady friend of the house of York, drew a large assembly in St. John's field by a muster of the troops under his command. The Bishop of Exeter who was present addressed the people; and in an eloquent speech suited to the occasion, set forth the claim of Edward of York, the defective title and mental disabilities of Henry, and the splendid prospect of national honour and prosperity under a young and ardent prince who had already displayed those distinguished qualities which were indispensable in the sovereign of England.†

Repeated plaudits followed the prelate's oration; and secure of the approval of the commons the lords met in council together in Baynard's castle, where after short deliberation it was unanimously determined that Henry, having violated the treaty which had assured the throne to him during his life, the heir of York was absolved from his oath and at

* Hall. † William of Wyrcestre.

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liberty to accept the crown offered by their hands, Edward proceeded immediately at the head of his friends to Westminster Hall, where ascending the throne he recited the just pretensions of his family to an applauding auditory. Bursts of "Long live King Edward!" continually obliged him to pause. Again in the church when he repeated his address he was interrupted by the same gratifying sounds, and being proclaimed by the herald in every part of the city with the usual ceremonies, he assumed the exercise of regal authority. The house of Lancaster fell from its proud height to revive only after a long and stormy period in an obscure scion of an illegitimate branch.*

Mar. 4. 1461.

Edward, who never allowed the white rose to droop beneath its crimson adversary, would not await the ceremony of coronation,—a solemnity important to a monarch under his peculiar circumstances,—but hastened to strike the decisive blow which should leave him without a rival in the kingdom. His stay in the metropolis did not exceed eight days, yet even in that brief period he exhibited the cruel propensities of his savage nature, by ordering the execution of a grocer, who for an idle speech in allusion to the disputed succession, was condemned to suffer death. He had said that he would make his son heir to the crown, the crown being the sign of his shop; and Edward, in his brutal jealousy of the Lancastrian line, took the life of him who dared to make a jest of his pretensions.

Margaret's retreating army, augmented to sixty thousand men, a larger number than either party had yet brought into the field, lay at York. Edward

* Whethamsted

proceeded northwards at the head of forty-eight thousand six hundred and sixty followers, and taking up his own quarters at Pontefract, commanded the Lord Fitzwalter to establish himself at Ferrybridge. A detachment of Lancastrians under Lord Clifford moved forward to surprise this post: they gained the bridge under cover of the night, attacked and slew the keepers. Lord Fitzwalter, aroused from sleep by the sudden assault, seized a battle axe, and not waiting for his defensive armour, rushed to the scene of action and was immediately killed.* This severe check in the commencement of their enterprise spread dismay through the ranks of the Yorkists. Warwick perceiving the effect it was likely to produce, with his usual reckless impetuosity, flew with the news to the king; and alighting from his horse, he plunged his sword into the animal's heart,† and kissing the cross which formed a hilt to the reeking blade, swore by that sacred symbol that he would dispute the forthcoming field until victory or death should end the conflict. Edward with better judgment essayed to allay the terrors which had crept into his soldiery, by publishing a proclamation granting permission for all to depart who were afraid to abide the issue, and promising to reward the fidelity of those who steadily maintained the combat both against the

* Hall.

† Every Palm-Sunday (the day on which the battle of Towton was fought), a rough figure, called 'the red horse,' on the side of a hill in Warwickshire, is scoured out. This is suggested to be done in commemoration of the horse which the Earl of Warwick slew on that day, determined to vanquish or die.

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enemy and any of the dastards amid their own comrades tempted by danger to retreat.* He also directed Lord Falconberg to pass the river and surround the Lancastrians. Clifford, alarmed by this movement, endeavoured to rejoin the main army, but retreat was already cut off: a sharp conflict took place; and putting aside his gorget, "either for heat or pain," he was struck in the throat by an arrow, and fell, together with the greater number of his party. Hitherto it had been the policy of the Yorkists to strike at the leaders of the opposing faction and to spare their followers. Every preceding battle had been distinguished by a long list of nobles and knights amongst the slain, whilst the loss of private soldiers was comparatively small; but not sympathizing with his father's humane desire to save the effusion of blood, Edward met his ruthless enemies upon equal terms. It was well understood that no quarter would be given on either side.

The day was dark and tempestuous which ushered in the dreadful strife of these murderous combatants. The rival roses encountered each other on a plain between the villages of Towton and Saxton upon the eve of Palm Sunday. Lord Falconberg commenced the attack with infinite judgment, taking advantage of a blinding snow, which, by a fortunate change in the wind, set full in the faces of his opponents, he galled them with his arrows, whilst the weapons of the Lancastrians weakened by the force of the tempest fell short of the enemy, who picked them up and returned them with fatal effect. Nor-

Mar. 29. 1461.

* Hall.

thumberland and Sir Andrew Trollope the commanders of the vanguard being at length aware of their perilous situation, pushed on with their soldiers to closer contact. The work of destruction now commenced with dreadful havoc on both sides, every breast seemed animated with the most implacable animosity, and the dire attendants upon civil discord augmented the horrors of the battle. The dearest ties of consanguinity were severed, and men beheld without shuddering the violation of every tender feeling of humanity. Fathers spared not their sons, and brethren of the same house died by each other's hands.* Thus fiercely and vindictively engaged, the combat was maintained with unparalleled obstinacy. The excellent disposition of Edward's forces enabled him to cope successfully with the crowded ranks of his antagonists; his keen eye marked the weakest points,† and strengthening them with fresh reserves, the beaten and dispirited were replaced by new detachments: but according to Hearne‡ even these skilful arrangements would scarcely have prevailed against the superior numbers of the Lancastrians, had not the arrival of the Duke of Norfolk with his levies after the battle had lasted ten hours obliged the queen's party to fall back. The Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, Sir Andrew Trollope and many thousands were left upon the field, but preserving good order in their retreat, their final overthrow was occasioned by the intervention of a small but deep river, which opposing an unexpected and fatal barrier threw the retiring army into irremediable confusion. Numbers

* Hall. † Hall. ‡ Fragments, p. 237

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fell by the swords of the pursuers, and the devouring stream choked at length by the bodies of the drowned,* afforded a free passage to the surviving few, whilst the waters of the distant Wharfe were stained crimson with the torrent of blood shed in the dismal conflict. The Dukes of Somerset and Exeter escaped; and the disastrous intelligence being conveyed to the king and queen at York, they fled instantly, and with the young prince were fortunate enough to reach Berwick in safety. The Earls of Devon and Wiltshire overtaken by the enemy were immediately sacrificed to the resentment of the conqueror, who marching into York took down the ghastly remains of his father and the Earl of Salisbury, to replace them with the heads of fresh victims to the barbarous mode of warfare which Margaret had introduced with such fatal results to her own party.

Justly apprehending the vengeance of the Yorkists, the widow of Lord Clifford conveyed her children away from certain destruction. Imitating the cruelty which they reprobated, the crime of the parent would have been visited upon the son by the triumphant party; and so strict was the search made after the heir of him who slew young Rutland, that even the mean disguise of a peasant was not considered a sufficient protection; he was removed from place to place, and remained in ignorance of his parentage for several years, his guardians not daring to teach him to write, lest this unwonted accomplishment should betray his rank.†

* Hall.

† It was remarked of Lord Clifford that he, his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, were all killed in battle, two at home and two abroad.

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The people of London awaited the event of the meeting between the rival roses with anxious expectation; the joyful tidings of victory were conveyed in a letter* written by Edward himself to his mother the Duchess of York: he informs her that the heralds appointed to number the dead gave in a list of twenty-eight thousand on the part of the Lancastrians; we may suppose his own loss to have been proportionally great, since it is not mentioned in this document.

The mayor and citizens of York, entreated grace at the conqueror's hands through the mediation of Lord Montague, which Edward granted; he knighted William Hastings, afterwards so conspicuous an ornament of his court, with other distinguished gentlemen on the field, and entered the neighbouring city in triumph.

The new king spent the months of April and May in reducing the north to obedience, and then proceeded to London to be crowned. He was received with enthusiastic affection, the mayor and aldermen richly clad in scarlet, with four hundred of the common council on horseback in green liveries advanced to meet him, and swelled the number of his

The heir remained twenty-four years in concealment, not daring to emerge from his retreat until the accession of Henry VII. who restored to him the forfeited honours of his family; he was afterwards in the reign of Henry VIII. a distinguished commander, and performed valiant service for the crown at Flodden Field. It is related of him that when he came to parliament he behaved nobly and wisely, but otherwise seldom came to London or to court, delighting to live in the country, where he repaired his castles which had fallen into decay.—*Banks's Baronage. Collins's Peerage.*

The fair Rosamond of Henry II. was a daughter of an ancestor of this ancient house.

* Fenn's Collection, vol. i. p. 217.

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followers as he rode to the Tower. Thirty-two newly created Knights of the Bath, in gowns and hoods of white silk, preceded him on the following day to Westminster, where the ceremony of coronation was solemnly performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The late slaughter amongst the nobility and the flight and attainder of all who espoused the cause of the red rose occasioned a very thin attendance of peers; only one duke was present. Edward to supply this deficiency raised his brothers George and Richard to that dignity by the titles of Clarence and Gloucester.

June 1461.

After the Battle of Wakefield, the Duchess of York, alarmed by the cruel murder of young Rutland, had sent these children to Utrecht,* where they remained under the care of the Duke of Burgundy until more prosperous times enabled them to rejoin their family.

Edward displayed the most relentless severity towards every member of the opposite party; the black catalogue of the act of attainder comprehended Henry VI., Margaret, Prince Edward their son, a long list of noblemen, and one hundred and thirty-eight knights, esquires, and ecclesiastics.† Those who had escaped the carnage of the late battle were doomed to fall by the axe of the executioner, the titles of the alleged traitors were forfeited, and their estates confiscated to the king's use. These cruel measures met the sanction of parliament, both houses unanimously pronounced Henry VI. and his immediate predecessors to be usurpers, and were willing to prevent the recurrence of a struggle

* Hall. † Parliament Rolls.

for the crown by the total extermination of the Lancastrians; but Edward's barbarous policy failed in its object, the greater number of his rival's partizans were beyond his reach, and the blood which he caused to flow on the scaffold purchased irreconcilable hatred from the relatives of the slain. In beheading the Earl of Oxford, who with his eldest son was hurried to the block for his attachment to the House of Lancaster, he raised up an active, vigilant, and implacable enemy in the successor of these murdered lords; though a hundred times defeated, this enterprizing nobleman returned again to the charge, and by his unremitting hostility triumphed at last over the fading glories of the white rose. CHAP. XIX.

The senate after passing those sanguinary enactments which disgraced their rolls, endeavoured with a better spirit to provide against the repetition of the feuds which had so lately deluged the land with blood, by forbidding the distribution of badges and liveries by nobles to their friends and retainers, unless in actual service with the king;* they likewise strove to check the general licentiousness of the times, by limiting the diversion of cards and dice to the twelve days of Christmas.

The spoils of the Lancastrians enabled Edward to reward his friends. Henry Bourchier, his uncle by marriage, and the brother of the Archbishop of Canterbury, was created Earl of Essex, Lord Falconberg Earl of Kent, and John Nevill the brother of Warwick, Lord Montague. The session ended, he dismissed the commons with a kind and courteous speech, addressing the speaker by name: 1461.

* Hall.

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"James Strangways, and ye that be come for the commons of this my land, for the true hearts and tender considerations that ye have had to my right and title, that I and my ancestors have had unto the crown of this realm, the which from us have been a long time withheld: and now, thanked be Almighty God, of whose grace groweth all victory, by youre true hearts and great assistance, I am restored unto that which is my right and title.* Wherefore I thank you as heartily as I can. Also for the tender and true hearts that ye have shewed unto me, in that ye have tenderly had in remembrance the correction of the horrible murder and cruel death of my lord my father, my brother Rutland, and my cousin of Salisbury and other, I thank you right heartily, and I shall be unto you, with the grace of Almighty God, as good and gracious sovereign lord, as ever was any of my noble projenitors to their subjects and leige-men. And for the faithful and loving hearts, and also the great labours that ye have borne and sustained towards me in the recovering of my said right and title which I now possess, I thank you with all my heart, and if I had any better good to reward you withal than my body, ye should have it, the which shall always be ready for your defence, never sparing nor letting for no jeopardy, praying you all of your hearty assistance and good countenance, as I shall be unto you very rightwise, and loving leige lord."

It was by these gratifying condescensions that Edward retained the affections of his people; his frank and popular manners added to the extreme

* Parliament Rolls, 5, p. 487.

beauty of his person attracted the multitude, and many dark deeds were palliated and excused in one who masked his tyranny under a graceful and affable exterior.

Surrounded by potent friends and in the possession of supreme authority, the hopes of the Lancastrians seemed to be extinguished for ever. Wales submitted to the new monarch; the gentlemen and men of substance offered their allegiance, and the Duke of Exeter and the Earl of Pembroke were pursued by the Yorkists to the mountains, whose bleak heights could alone afford them refuge.* Lord Hungerford and others, who had fled to the continent, were exposed to even greater dangers; arrested at Dieppe, and uncertain of his fate Lord Hungerford wrote to the queen, entreating her not to venture from Scotland with her son, unless upon extreme necessity, yet even in this distress his courage did not fail.† He spoke cheeringly of the prospect of his release, and promised if life was permitted to join her on the instant, trusting that by the unremitting exertions of the faithful few who still espoused Henry's cause to see him peaceably in his realm again. Margaret's unshaken heroism nobly sustained her through the dark hours of her adversity; she repaired from court to court imploring aid from more fortunate sovereigns; she purchased the friendship of Scotland by the surrender of Berwick, and the Earl of Angus flattered by the prospect of an English dukedom, engaged in her service. From Scotland the queen sailed to Bretagne, where the reigning duke touched by her sorrows presented her with twelve thousand 1426.

* Fenn's Letters, vol. i. p. 243. † Fenn, vol. i. p. 249.

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crowns. The sordid successor of Charles VII. king of France, Louis XI, refused to sympathize with the misfortunes of his illustrious relative until tempted by the offer of Calais as a security he consented to a loan of twenty thousand crowns, and granted permission to Pierre Brezé, a chivalrous knight of some military renown and Seneschal of Normandy, to accompany the Queen to England, with two thousand soldiers.

Edward with his usual vigilance dispatched a fleet to intercept these levies, but a deceitful gleam of sunshine enabled them to land upon the Lorders, where they were joined by Somerset, Pembroke who had escaped out of Wales, and other lords, with such slender equipments as they could muster. The Lancastrians raised their standard, but the dawning hopes of the luckless queen were damped by the coldness of her expected supporters; the people of the country, weary perhaps with warfare, did not flock as they had heretofore done to the red rose, and the rapid advance of Warwick at the head of twenty thousand men, followed by the active Edward, obliged the Lancastrians to retreat. The English shut themselves up in Bamborough, Dunstanburgh, and Alnwick castles, and Margaret with her Norman allies sought the ships; equally unfortunate at sea as on shore, the ravages of a violent tempest despoiled her of her few remaining treasures, scarcely escaping with life in a small boat to Berwick, all her valuable property was swallowed up in the waves, five hundred soldiers wrecked upon Holy Island were killed or taken prisoners by Lord Ogle; and again a desti-

tute wanderer she experienced the additional misery of seeing her friends fall off.

The three castles were closely invested by the persevering Warwick who, taking up his quarters at a convenient distance at Warkworth, rode daily to direct the movements of the besiegers.* After a gallant but fruitless resistance two were compelled to surrender; Lord Pembroke and Lord Roos stipulated for a safe conduct to Scotland with the garrisons, but Somerset and Percy made overtures to Edward who had stationed himself at Newcastle, which were accepted, and they took the oath of fealty to the House of York. Somerset it is said was driven to this base desertion of Henry's interests by the dread of an injured woman's resentment: he had made a disgraceful boast to the King of France of the favours which he had received from Mary of Gueldres, dowager Queen of Scotland, and dared not return to his old asylum, as he was aware that the lady meditated a deep revenge upon the unmanly treachery which had betrayed her frailty.

Alnwick castle still held out, and the Lancastrians under Pierre Brezé made a bold effort to relieve it; 1463.
they attacked Warwick's camp but were repulsed. Lord Hungerford at the head of a few knights sallied from the castle, and cutting a passage through the enemy, joined his friends and accompanied their retreat. The garrison left to their own guidance immediately capitulated. Somerset upon this occasion was seen with Percy fighting in the ranks of the Yorkists, and Edward, happy to gain over a nobleman

* Fenn.

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so closely allied to his rival, distinguished the faithful services of the day with particular marks of grace and favour.

The affairs of Margaret were now desperate. Daily exposed to the most alarming vicissitudes, she had struggled through the winter against an accumulation of evils, flying from place to place in disguise. As she journeyed through the wilds of Northumberland with the young prince and the Seneschal of Normandy, the queen was attacked by a horde of outlaws,* who plundered her of every valuable which she possessed. A prisoner in the hands of these lawless men, Margaret's courage and presence of mind did not forsake her; they quarrelled over their booty, and whilst engaged in fighting with each other, she caught her son in her arms and hurried him into the deepest recesses of the wood: here however she was not safe; encountering another robber, she had no resource but to throw herself upon his mercy, and leading up Prince Edward to this new assailant exclaimed, "Friend, to your loyalty I entrust the son of your king." Struck by the magnanimity and distress of suffering majesty, the robber, less rude than his appearance denoted, assured the royal suppliants of his protection, and restored them in safety to their friends.

Henry was in a situation equally disconsolate.† Bereft of all his former splendour, and attended only by four men and a boy, after escaping numerous perils he found refuge in Wales.‡ Harlech Castle in Merionethshire is mentioned as the place of the monarch's retreat, a fortress of considerable strength

* Monstrelet. † Paston Letters. ‡ Monstrelet.

which was entrusted to six Welch captains, one of whom, Davydd ab Jevan ab Einiawn, for a long time effectually resisted all the efforts of Edward's commanders to take it, saying, "I held a tower in France till all the old women in Wales heard of it, and now the old women in France shall hear how I defended the Welch castle."* The Cambrian hero was however compelled to surrender, and Jasper Tudor who in June 1468 had sailed from France with a few ships, and mustered sufficient force to make himself master of Denbigh, was by the success of the Yorkists obliged to seek a more inaccessible asylum. Edward IV. created William Lord Herbert, who had wrested the strong hold from the Lancastrians, Earl of Pembroke, a title of which the late proscriptions and attainders had deprived the adventurous Tudor, and granted the life of its gallant defender to the spirited interposition of Sir Richard Herbert the earl's brother, who upon the king's refusal boldly said, "that his highness might take his life instead of that of the Welch captain, for that he would assuredly replace Davydd in his castle, and the king might send whom he pleased to take him out again."

The difficult ground which the English crossed to besiege Harlech Castle is still entitled Ile Herbert,† *i. e.* Herbert's Place. Margaret was in all probability endeavouring to join her husband in these almost impregnable towers at the period in which she was so cruelly endangered by banditti; she accomplished her purpose, and sailed from hence to

* History of the Gwedir Family. † Pennant.

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Sluys in Flanders, still indefatigably bent upon disputing the crown with Henry's fortunate rival.

Edward had secured the neutrality of France and Burgundy by a politic truce with each of these powers, and Margaret compelled to ask shelter of the latter sovereign met with a cold reception; but experienced more cordial kindness from his son the Earl of Charolois. The Duke declined all interference in behalf of Henry, yet in the present exigence presented his afflicted queen with a sum of money, and gave her safe conduct to the Dutchy of Bar in Lorraine, which belonged to her father. The Duke of Exeter and two hundred exiles accompanied Margaret in her retreat, their only support in adversity the forlorn hope that their unyielding exertions would still revive the drooping fortunes of the House of Lancaster. Continual insurrections in different parts of England favoured this expectation. During the space of two years the new government was disturbed by repeated risings of the people, and such strong indications of attachment to the red rose were manifested in the northern and western counties that the friends of Henry deemed themselves strong enough to take the field again.

Somerset and Percy encouraged by this favourable but delusive aspect, were tempted to violate their recent oaths of allegiance; the latter armed his feudal retainers on the borders, and the former stole secretly through Wales and Lancashire to meet them. Henry emerged from his retreat in Wales, the queen and her friends quitted the continent, and aided by a Scottish force prepared to recommence the war. Somerset obtained possession of Bamborough and

Dunstanburgh castles; that of Alnwick was surprised by a late adherent of the House of York, Sir Ralph Gray, who had revolted from Edward in proud anger at the advancement of another to the command of this castle, to which he considered he had been entitled as a reward for his own distinguished services.* CHAP. XIX.

* William of Wyrcestre.

CHAPTER XX.

Ravages committed by the Queen's Army—Battle of Hedgly Moor—Death of Northumberland—Battle of Hexham—Execution of Somerset and of two other Nobles—Dispersion of the Lancastrians—Fall of Bamborough Castle—Execution of Sir Ralph Grey—Henry is taken Prisoner—Warwick's Barbarity—The King is committed to the Tower—Persecution of the Lancastrians—their extreme Distress—Treaties with Foreign Powers—A general Pardon—Edward's clandestine Marriage—Beauty and Virtue of Elizabeth Grey—Ambition of her Family—Promulgation of the Marriage—Public Disapprobation—The Queen enters London—She is crowned—Triumph of Lord Stanley—Depression of the Nobility—Advancement of the Wydevilles—Loyalty of the Hollands—Warwick's Displeasure—his Ambition—his Hostility to the King's Measures—his Embassy to France—Arrival of the Bastard of Burgundy—Splendid Tournament—Triumph of Antony Wydeville—The King's Jealousy of the Nevills—Death of the Duke of Burgundy—Offer of the King of France—Warwick's Discontent—Policy of the Lancastrians—Edward's Precaution—Reconciliation of Warwick and the King—Departure of the Princess Margaret—The Gift of the Citizens—Pageant in Honour of the Princess—Knightly Prowess of Sir Antony Wydeville—Exile of the Lancastrians.

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1464. April 25.

THE queen's army rendered itself formidable by the devastation it committed in plundering the adjacent country; but before all the allies could meet, the first division of Edward's troops under Lord Montague surprised Hungerford and Percy with their forces upon Hedgley Moor: alarmed by the superiority of the foe, they made a precipitate retreat,

leaving one of the leaders on the field.* Percy, in falling, exclaimed "I have saved the bird in my bosom!" a vain boast since, though dying for Henry, he had forfeited his loyalty both to the red and to the white rose.

Montague followed up his victory, and advancing with rapid steps encountered the great body of the Lancastrians near Hexham. Conscious that it must be a final effort, the friends of Henry rallied all their energies to meet the hostile shock of their opponents. The steady valour and good fortune of the Yorkists prevailed: Montague penetrated the centre of the queen's forces, and all was flight and confusion.† Somerset swiftly overtaken was beheaded on the spot: the third duke of that luckless race who had lost his life in the civil wars. The Lords Roos and Hungerford, illustrious for their personal bravery and unwavering attachment to their ill-fated monarch, discovered in a wood, were also executed, and the scaffold streamed with the blood of their followers.‡ Henry obtained a temporary asylum in strict concealment in Lancashire. "The King," says Hall, "was this day the best horseman in company, for he fled so faste that no man could take him, and yet he was so nere pursued that certain of his heuxmen or followers were taken, their horses being trapped in blue velvet; wherof one of them had on his head the said King Henry's helmet, some say his high cap of estate garnished with two rich crowns."

The queen, with the Duke of Exeter, the young Duke of Somerset and other fugitives, returned to

* Hall. † Hall. ‡ Hall.

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the continent, and a few of those who fled gained the castle of Bamborough with Sir Ralph Grey, where they were instantly besieged by the Earl of Warwick. This fortress was sufficiently strong to bid defiance to its assailants; but an accident which endangered the life of the commander permitted the garrison to obey their own judgment, and they surrendered without providing for the knight's security. He recovered from the severe contusions which he had received, to sate the vengeance of the conqueror; for his apostacy left no hope of Edward's mercy. Led into the presence of the vindictive king at Doncaster,* Lord Worcester, a ready minister of his sovereign's cruelties, pronounced the sentence which doomed him to a traitor's death, and swift execution followed. The knightly spurs were stricken from his heels,† the attendant heralds tore the coat of arms from his body, his sword was broken over his head, and thus degraded he was conducted to the end of the town, where the scaffold and the axe finished his earthly pilgrimage.‡

July 1464.

The cap of state, worked with crowns of gold and embroidered with pearls, belonging to Henry VI. was brought to the conqueror by Montague's pursuing troops. They had surprised three of the forlorn king's servants; and in the course of the year the treachery of a monk disclosed the secret place of the royal wanderer's retreat. Henry was seized as he sate at dinner in Waddington Hall, by the people belonging to Sir John Harrington, and conducted to Islington,§ where the Earl of Warwick taking charge of the illustrious prisoner, added per-

* William of Wyrcestre. † Stow. ‡ Hall. § Rymer.

sonal indignity to his previous sufferings.* The earl issued a proclamation which forbade the display of any token of respect to the fallen monarch.†

Henry's legs were tied to the stirrups of his horse to shew that he was a captive, and in this miserable state he was led thrice round the pillory, a needless barbarity to one so meek in prosperity, so patient under adverse fortune; and conducted along Cheapside and Cornhill, exposed to the insults of the fickle multitude, who had been wont to shew their reverence for his virtues by applauding shouts, was lodged in the Tower.

Edward, somewhat relaxing in his severity softened the rigours of the king's confinement by a humane and liberal system, and the prison which would have been so insupportably irksome to an ambitious mind, was to the unaspiring Henry a haven of refuge from the storms of life.

New bills of attainder swept the Lancastrian nobles from the lists of the peerage, and the conqueror rewarded his partizans with the forfeited titles and estates. Lord Montague was created Earl of Northumberland, and Lord Herbert Earl of Pembroke. The life of Jasper Tudor, whose wealth and dignities enriched the friends of the House of York, was in continual jeopardy; reduced to the most severe distress, he found no safety except in perpetual change of place. The exiles on the continent were also in a frightful state of destitution. Philip de Comines informs us that he has often seen the Duke of Exeter running barefoot behind the Duke of Burgundy's train for a trifling alms, and

* Fabian. † William of Wyrcestre.

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going from door to door begging his daily bread! The Somersets also, losing every thing upon the fall of Henry, were in a condition equally abject. A natural pride deterred them, notwithstanding the pressure of adversity, from making themselves known, but their rank being at length discovered, the Duke of Burgundy allowed them a small pension for their support.

In the hopeless depression of the House of Lancaster Edward strengthened himself on his throne by a friendly intercourse with foreign powers. He concluded a peace with Scotland for fifteen years, entered into an alliance with the Dukes of Bretagne and Burgundy, and his negociations with Denmark and Poland, Castile and Arragon, were equally successful. Pope Pius II. congratulated him upon his accession to the English crown, but gave no opinion respecting the legality of his title, thus betraying the secret bias of the court of Rome in favour of the House of Lancaster.* Louis of France, embarrassed by the confederacy which, under the name of the war of "the public good," he had provoked against him, was unable to take a decided part in either cause; and in perfect amity with the principal sovereigns of Europe, and assured of the tacit acquiescence of the rest, Edward now seemed too firmly established to dread the revival of the power of his adversaries.

The king's thirst for blood was at length appeased by the slaughter of the opposing party; he offered a general amnesty to his groaning subjects, and the people, terror-struck by the late remorseless execu-

* Rymer.

tions, blessed even the gory hand which bestowed a gracious and almost unexpected boon. CHAP. XX.

At peace abroad and endeared by his recent bounty and the joviality of his manners to the English nation, Edward ventured to disclose a secret marriage which was calculated to disappoint the hopes of many of his foreign and domestic friends. The circumstances attending this disastrous union are highly picturesque. At the very moment in which the young monarch was threatened by the conjunction of the northern counties under Margaret, his ungovernable passions precipitated him into an alliance of the most rash and imprudent nature. Following the diversion of the chace in the neighbourhood of Stoney Stratford, accident conducted him to the house of the Duchess of Bedford, at Grafton, the wife of Wydeville, Lord Rivers, whom he had treated so unceremoniously in their interview at Calais. The king was hospitably entertained by these warm supporters of the Lancastrian interest, and the Lady Elizabeth Grey, their daughter, a widow, and bereft of her children's inheritance by the confiscation of her late husband's property, being under her mother's roof, was advised to make an appeal to the king's generosity in this opportune visit. Leading her fatherless infants in her hand, the fair Elizabeth threw herself at Edward's feet, and besought him to restore to them a part of the forfeited estates. The king was deeply struck by the lady's beauty, and his captivation was completed by her grace, modesty, and sweetness; he hung enraptured over the lovely suppliant, and became in 1464. April.

* Hall.

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turn a suitor. Elizabeth was proof against the licentious addresses of the royal libertine; and, repulsing him gently but firmly, she riveted her conquest by her unaffected virtue. Assuring him that though too humble to be made his wife she was yet too proud to stoop to be his mistress, she induced him to shut his eyes against the dangers which threatened to result from so unequal an alliance, and to think only of securing the object of his rash idolatry.* The Duchess of Bedford, too much dazzled by the offered splendour to consider the consequences, eagerly promoted the elevation of her daughter. By her contrivance Edward met his bride early in the morning of the first of May, and the marriage
1464. was solemnized with the utmost privacy, two gentlewomen, a priest, and a boy, only being present beside the duchess and the parties immediately concerned.†

The precaution observed by the queen's family preserved the important secret until the following Michaelmas, when Edward deemed himself to be strong enough to hazard its acknowledgment. A general council of the peers was held at Reading, and the Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Warwick were prevailed upon by the king's entreaties to sanction a union which grieved and offended both, and leading the lady into the assembly, introduced her as their monarch's queen.

The discovery of Edward's ill-advised connection excited great scandal. The king endeavoured to excuse his weakness by alleging the difficulty of obtaining a suitable match in the present position of

* Hall. † Fabian.

his affairs, since foreign princes were unwilling to trust to the security of his crown during Henry's life, an unavailing plea contradicted by the readiness evinced by Scotland, Castille, and Savoy, to enter into a matrimonial alliance with the house of York.*

Edward had weakened the Lancastrian interest in Scotland, by affecting a desire to obtain a matrimonial alliance with Mary the dowager queen. Isabella of Castille subsequently complained of the King of England's unkind refusal of her hand, and though the old historians have erroneously asserted that a negociation had been actually entered into with the house of Savoy, there was probably some foundation for the report which so generally prevailed.

The nuptials of the Regent of France, brother of Henry V. with Jacqueline of Luxembourgh had been considered a degradation; this lady's subsequent union with a man of mean descent had reduced her still lower in the public opinion; the title conferred upon Richard Wydeville her husband, could not exalt him to a level with the proud aristocracy who held his recent elevation in undisguised scorn: and the king's condescension to a daughter of this despised family was attributed by his friends to the influence of spells and philters, administered by an adept in the forbidden art, a belief warranted by the gross superstitions of the age.† Edward, anxious to justify his choice, invited the queen's maternal uncle James of Luxembourgh to assist at the ensuing coronation. The earl came over magnificently attended by a retinue of one hundred knights and gentlemen.

* Hearne. † Fabian.

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1465. May.

The king also created thirty-eight Knights of the Bath to do honour to the ceremony, and upon Elizabeth's entry into the metropolis, the mayor, aldermen, and the different city companies, attired in the rude but gorgeous splendour incidental to the times, advanced to meet the royal lady and conducted her from Shooter's Hill to the Tower of London. On the Saturday after her arrival, the queen gratified the expecting eyes of the populace by a progress through the city, seated in an open horse litter, and attended by a gay procession of the newly created knights, she displayed her graceful beauty to admiring gazers. Her coronation took place at Westminster on the following Sunday, and was celebrated throughout the week by a succession of feasts and tournaments.

The inquietude of the preceding reign had long banished these popular diversions from the court, but under a young and gallant monarch, a lover of wine and minstrelsy, every kind of festivity promised to revive. The Lord Stanley, we are told, bore off the palm in the knightly sports and exercises upon this occasion, winning the ring and the ruby from all competitors.*

Edward strengthened the thin ranks of the peerage by raising the queen's family to wealth and dignity; their elevation was a natural consequence of her marriage, but independent of his desire to ennoble the relatives of his consort, the king was actuated by another and a stronger motive. Owing his crown to the power of the aristocracy, Edward felt the necessity of reducing this formidable body. The irresistible combination which had placed him upon the throne, might at some future period be

* William of Wyrcestre.

turned with fatal effect against the house of York. The very sound of Percy had been sufficient to raise the whole of Northumberland in arms. Other names were equally potent; and the king was therefore anxious to establish a new race of nobles who, invested with the titles, would yet be destitute of the authority which had proved so ruinous to the welfare of the sovereign. The experiment, fraught with danger to Edward's immediate heirs, ultimately succeeded in its object. Henry VII. adopted the same line of policy which, until the commons obtained a preponderating influence in the state, enabled the Tudors and the Stuarts to tyrannize over the nation with impunity. In pursuance of this measure, Edward took upon himself the disposal of the hands of all the wealthy heiresses made orphans in the late murderous war in marriage; the daughter of Lord Seales was given to Sir Antony Wydeville, the queen's brother, who enriched by his wife's estates succeeded also to her father's title. Lord Rivers was advanced to an earldom, and another of his sons, John, who had only reached his twentieth year, espoused the Duchess of Norfolk, a rich dowager of eighty, a disparity of age which drew forth the indignation of the chronicler, who applies the epithet "diabolicum" to this unequal marriage.* Thomas Grey, the son of Elizabeth by her former husband, was contracted to the king's niece, the daughter of the expatriated Duke of Exeter, who had married into the family of York. It is a coincidence worthy of remark that the present duke was placed in the same degree of relationship with the new monarch, as that

* William of Wyrcestre.

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which John Holand his ancestor, beheaded for his fidelity to Richard II., held towards Henry IV.; each was brother-in-law to the reigning king, and each sacrificed life and fortune in the service of his deposed rival: instances of heroic devotion exceedingly rare, and which occurring twice in the same family deserve the most honourable mention. The queen's sisters were also exalted by Edward's influence; one became Duchess of Buckingham, and the four others were united to the heirs of the Earls of Kent, Essex, Arundel, and the Lord Herbert.

These marriages were highly offensive to the old nobility: they looked upon the advancement of the Wydevilles with a jealous eye. Warwick had asked the hand of the Duke of Exeter's daughter for a nephew of his own, and was displeased by the ungracious partiality accorded to the new favourites. The Nevills expected the most boundless gratitude from the sovereign whom their exertions had raised to regal power. During the first years of Edward's reign they had enjoyed the supreme controul of his affairs; but the king could not always submit to their authority, and instigated by the ambition of the Wydevilles, ventured to oppose their measures and to act according to his own judgment. The government of Calais, together with the wardenship of the West Marches, the lieutenancy of Ireland, and the office of chamberlain, dignities inferior alone to those of the crown, had been bestowed upon the Earl of Warwick. George Nevill, Bishop of Exeter, one of his brothers, had succeeded to the chancellorship and the Archbishopric of York; and Lord Montague, the other, in addition to the titles and

estates of the Percies, had been made warden of the East Marches of Scotland.

The rewards thus bestowed, which by the king and his friends were deemed more than adequate to their services, did not satisfy the lofty expectations of this proud family. It has been suggested that Warwick hoped to find a son-in-law in the king: his eldest daughter was marriageable, and her union with the Duke of Clarence warrants the supposition that he aspired to royalty. All the ancient chroniclers concur in affirming, that the first disagreement which broke out between Richard Nevill and Edward was occasioned by the monarch's hasty nuptials with Lady Grey; and though they attribute Warwick's anger to the consequent disappointment of his negociations with the house of Savoy, an alliance which like that with Spain and Scotland had been only talked of, and never officially proposed, it is not unlikely that it originated in Edward's preference of another subject, a circumstance which could scarcely fail to gall the haughty noble. Other causes for disgust speedily arose: the queen's father superseded the Lord Mountjoy as treasurer, and at the resignation of the Earl of Worcester the Lord High Constable, he received that post of honour also. Thus every dignity seemed to be merging into this despised yet envied family.

The measures of the king's new adviser were diametrically opposite to those advocated by the Nevills. Warwick entertained an implacable hostility to the house of Burgundy, which, descended from a daughter of John of Ghent, had until the present period favoured the adherents of the house

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of Lancaster; but involved in a war with Louis XI. the duke was now anxious to obtain Edward's friendship. A union was therefore proposed between his son Count Charolois and Margaret of York the king's sister. The benefit which England would derive from the increase of its commerce with the Netherlands, and the advantage of separating the Burgundian family from Henry's interests, were alleged as reasons for the match; but Warwick openly and steadily opposed it: he contended that superior advantages would result from an alliance with France; and Edward, willing to amuse him with delusive hopes of ultimate success, dispatched him on a fruitless embassy to Louis.* The politic king administered to the ruling foible of his ambitious guest. Warwick was received at Rouen with all the honours of a sovereign prince. Intoxicated with this flattering homage, he readily fell into the monarch's views; repeated visits both public and private took place between them; and previously inclined to establish a permanent peace with Louis, he now became devoted to his interests. Freed from a disagreeable councillor, Edward in the mean time proceeded with the treaty proposed by Count Charolois. The fame of Antony Wydeville's martial accomplishments afforded the Count de la Roche,
1467. bastard of Burgundy, a pretext for visiting England. He arrived in June, and the utmost pomp and magnificence was displayed in his reception. He landed at Gravesend with a train of four hundred persons: a gallant assembly of nobles, knights and heralds.† Edward met his visitor at Blackwall with a splendid

* Monstrelet. † Walpole.

regatta of royal barges covered with cloth of gold and rich arras, and glittering with the costly attire of his attendants. The queen's brother was the challenger; and when the champions met in the king's presence in Fleet-street, Count Antony de la Roche, his opponent, touched the flower of Souvenance presented to him by the Chester herald in token of acceptance. The preliminaries of this solemn just were settled by a chapter convoked for the purpose in St. Paul's church. The tournament took place in Smithfield, where preparations had been made of the most sumptuous description. The timber and workmanship which enclosed the lists cost two hundred marks, and around them arose canopied pavilions gorgeously trapped for the reception of the rank and beauty of the court. The two knights gaily caparisoned, and mounted upon spirited coursers rushed to the encounter. Antony Wydeville nobly supported his country's honour: distinguished alike for his superior skill and chivalric courtesy, he prevailed both on horseback and on foot for two successive days; the heralds interposing by Edward's command upon each occasion time enough to prevent the stranger from being disgraced by absolute defeat. The prize, a collar of gold, enamelled with the flower of Souvenance, was unanimously awarded to the English noble, and he received it at the hands of the queen's ladies upon a day appointed for the purpose.

The cordial welcome thus given to the Burgundian displeased the Archbishop of York, who refused to attend the parliament which had assembled early in the month, on pretence of sickness, and Edward

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somewhat alarmed by a report which had reached him concerning the suspicious intimacy between Warwick and the King of France, went in person to the prelate's house, with a sufficient attendance to secure his obedience, and demanding the seals, obliged him to relinquish two manors, which had been granted by the crown, and which the king was now enabled to resume by a recent act of parliament.*

The Duke of Burgundy's death at this juncture suspended the negociations for his son's marriage. The Count de la Roche returned home, and Warwick immediately quitting France arrived in London accompanied by ambassadors from Louis to the King of England. The French monarch, anxious to prevent the projected alliance, and trusting that Edward would be easily allured by so flattering a prospect, held out a hope of the restoration of Normandy and Guienne; he proposed that they should prefer their respective pretensions to the Pope, who should engage to pronounce judgment within four years, and he offered also to pay an annual pension to the king.† Edward, undazzled by the expectation of recovering his foreign dominions, paid slight attention to these advances, and deputing another person to entertain the embassy, quitted the metropolis. The agents of Louis disappointed by the failure of their mission, departed from England, and Warwick in undisguised resentment proceeded to his castle of Middleham, in Yorkshire: whilst brooding over his wrongs the treaty was concluded between the Duke

* Rymer. † History of Louis XI.

of Burgundy and Edward. Margaret of York publicly announced her consent to the marriage at a grand council held at Kingston, and soon afterwards it was rumoured abroad that Warwick was secretly intending the restoration of Henry VI. This report was propagated by a partizan of Margaret of Anjou, who had been taken in Wales, and was in all probability a subtle device on the part of the Lancastrians to divide the king from his most powerful friends.* Edward impoliticly gave credit to the calumny, and Warwick, justly alarmed by these signs of waning favour, refused to quit the security of his castle to answer the charge. The accuser was in consequence brought before the earl at Middleham, who repelled the allegation, which was pronounced to be groundless, but Edward notwithstanding this acquittal plainly evinced his distrust by the appointment of a body guard of two hundred archers, who received orders to be in constant attendance about the monarch's person. The danger which these mutual grievances threatened was for the present averted by the mediation of their friends. The Archbishop of York was induced to hold a conference with the Earl of Rivers at Nottingham; by the exertions of these noblemen the late unhappy differences were adjusted, and Warwick paid his respects to the king at Coventry, and was apparently restored to the monarch's confidence.

Upon the departure of the Princess Margaret to the Netherlands Richard Nevill appeared at court, and taking the lady behind him rode through the city to shew his entire approval of her marriage with

* William of Wyrcestre.

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the Duke of Burgundy; she was accompanied also by the king her brother and a stately train of knights and ladies to the sea-side, where she embarked with a select number of attendants for Sluys. The lord mayor had presented the bride with a hundred pounds in two rich basins, an acceptable but not a very refined token of the city's regard; upon her arrival on a foreign shore she was received with gorgeous manifestations of the people's joy, which displayed itself in a style of elegance to which her own country had not as yet attained. The houses of the principal towns were illuminated by torches and wax-lights,* pinnacles of fire "subtilly devised" blazed in the streets, which were also lined by the inhabitants, each standing at his own door bearing a flaming torch in his hand. A stage covered with tapestry was erected near the lodgings of the princess, whereon were exhibited the splendid pageants of Jason and the Golden Fleece, the Queens Vashti and Esther.† Tournaments unrivalled in magnificence were performed upon the lady's marriage at the duke's court, which is described by a gentleman in Margaret's train as only to be compared with that of King Arthur for pomp and chivalry. Shining with jewels, and emblazoned with gold and pearl wrought with the most exquisite workmanship,‡ the glittering circle dazzled the admiring eyes of the English spectators. Sir Anthony Wydeville, Lord Scales, maintained his knightly reputation in the field, and carried off the first prize; and Margaret's arrival

* Harleian MSS. No. 543.

† "The best that ever I saw," observes the writer in the Paston Letters.

‡ Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. p. 6.

in Bruges presaging the evils which her unrelenting hostility brought upon the house of Lancaster, was preceded by the departure of the Duke of Somerset, who, driven from his place of refuge by the duke's marriage with the rival family, sought a more secure asylum.*

"They say," writes John Paston, "that he, the Duke of Somerset, is (gone) to Queen Margaret, that was, and shall no come here again, nor be holpen of the duke."

* Fenn.

CHAPTER XXI.

Hollow Peace between Edward and Warwick—Increasing Favour of the Wydevilles—Causes for Warwick's Displeasure—Marriage of the Duke of Clarence—The People begin to murmur—Prudent Measures of the King of France—Disturbances in the North—Neutrality of Northumberland—The Nevills participate in the Revolt—Proclamations of the Malecontents—Activity of Edward—Flight of the Wydevilles—Quarrel between Pembroke and Stafford—Battle of Edgecote—Defeat of Pembroke—Melancholy Fate of Sir Henry Nevill—Execution of the Pembrokes—Death of the Two Wydevilles—and of Stafford—Distress of Edward—he falls into the hands of Warwick—The King-maker may now decide the Fate of the rival Houses—Delusive Hopes of the Lancastrians—Spirited Conduct of Edward's Friends—Release of the King—he returns to London—Warwick is restored to favour—The Insurgents are pardoned—Divisions amongst the Nobility—Suspicions of Edward and of Warwick—A new Conspiracy—Reconciliation of Edward and Clarence—Revolt in Lincolnshire—Imprudence of Lord Welles—Defeat of the Rebels—Execution of the Leaders—Retreat of Warwick—he is proclaimed a Traitor—Restoration of Percy to the Honours of his Family—Montague's Displeasure—Warwick sails to Calais—is denied Admittance—and hospitably entertained by Louis XI.—Reconciliation of Warwick with Margaret of Anjou—Betrothment of Prince Edward with the Lady Anne—Warwick's extensive Preparations—Discontent of the Duke and Duchess of Clarence.

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EDWARD vainly flattered himself that the pacification which had lately taken place would be lasting, and under this delusion he lavished favours on the Wydevilles, which again kindled a flame in War-

wick's breast. Taught by the Duke of York that it was a subject's duty to remove ill-advisers from the sovereign's ear, and accustomed to direct his arms against Henry's ministry, when other measures for their expulsion failed, the earl readily obeyed the suggestions of his affronted pride, and pondered upon the means of reducing Edward to that state of vassalage which could alone satisfy his inordinate ambition. Many circumstances combined to incense Warwick against the king. It is said that Edward's uncontrolable licentiousness did not even respect the family of the most illustrious peer in England. Hall asserts that the king made a shameless attempt upon the virtue of a daughter or a niece of the Earl of Warwick; and Carte names the lady in Isabella, his eldest child. Such an affront if offered must have rankled deeply in Warwick's proud heart, and the king's opposition to the honourable proposals of his brother widened the breach between them. This hostility was equally unwise and unavailing; the haughty earl had been too long in the habit of holding the commands of his sovereign at defiance to yield to Edward's wishes. The Duke of Clarence was next male heir to the crown, and the connection was too flattering to Warwick's aspiring hopes to be relinquished; the marriage therefore took place in despite of the professed disapprobation of the king, the ceremony being performed at Calais by George Nevill, Archbishop of York, a true member of this fierce and unbending race.

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July 11. 1469.

The national expectations from the new dynasty had been grievously disappointed. Edward had succeeded to the throne destitute of his father's ex-

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perience, numberless evils remained unredressed: the same greedy rapacity was exhibited in the nobles, and the same poverty attending on the crown obliged the king to have recourse to a system of taxation similar to that which fell so heavily upon the people in Henry's reign. The expedient of resuming the royal grants was rendered ineffectual by the numerous exceptions which were made in favour of the king's friends, it was consequently not difficult to stir up insurrections against a government which had failed to satisfy a large portion of the community.

Edward meditated a foreign war as the means of occupying the active spirits of the age, but the intended enterprize was prevented by the wise policy of the French monarch: Louis saw the impending storm and hastened to avert it by concluding a truce with his neighbours of Bretagne and Burgundy,* and the King of England not able to cope with France single-handed, contented himself with sending a fleet to watch the movements of Margaret, who had collected a few ships at Harfleur; he was soon afterwards called upon to suppress a dangerous rebellion which broke out at home.

The Duke of Clarence equally dissatisfied with Warwick at the elevation of the Wydevilles, suffered himself to be prevailed upon to enter into a conspiracy against the new favourites. The negociations of the disaffected peers were carried on in secret, and a revolt burst upon Edward the more alarming since he could only guess at the concealed leaders.† Fifteen thousand men appeared in arms in the north,

* William of Wyrcestre. † History of Croyl.

headed by a captain whom they called Robin of Redesdale; their ostensible motive was the resistance of an ancient right demanded by the warden of the hospital of St. Leonard's. The Earl of Northumberland suffered the rebels to assemble without a single attempt to oppose or disperse them, until they threatened the destruction of the city of York: he then advanced to the attack, achieved an easy victory, and executed their leader on the field; his conduct however, notwithstanding this exertion in the king's favour, was calculated to excite suspicion; satisfied with the deliverance of York he remained supine whilst the insurgents rallied under the command of two gentlemen connected with his own family. Two young men the sons of the Lords Fitzhugh and Latimer, the nephew and cousin german of Warwick, put themselves at the head of the army, and by the direction of a more experienced person, Sir John Conyers, led the malecontents southwards to meet the Earl of Warwick, whose name connected with a popular object drew thousands to the rebels' banners. Upon their march they issued proclamations formed upon the model of those which the Duke of York had so often promulgated; these articles set forth the grievances of the commons from the heavy impositions which they sustained through the mal-administration of the queen's relatives, who they alleged had engrossed the supreme authority, to the exclusion of the lords of the king's blood.*

Edward summoned his retainers with his usual celerity; he visited Suffolk and Norfolk in person, and then hastened to the scene of action, where,

* Harleian MSS. No. 543.

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taking up his station at Fotheringay he perceived the extent of the danger, and warning the queen's father and brothers of their perilous situation, advised them to seek the security of their own estates. Upon the arrival of fresh troops the king marched forward to Newark, but finding the rebels too strong for any chance of successful opposition, retreated to Nottingham, where he hoped to be joined by the Earl of Pembroke with levies from Wales.* Pembroke, at the head of eight thousand soldiers, met the Lord Stafford with his forces consisting of five thousand men from the western counties, and upon this junction prepared to attack the rebels who had stationed themselves upon Edgecote-Hill, near Banbury in Wiltshire. The royalists entered the town, and an unfortunate quarrel between the leaders was followed by the most disastrous consequences.† Stafford had taken up his quarters at an inn in which it is said a damsel lived for whom he had formed an attachment, but Pembroke, with the turbulent insolence characteristic of the times, chose the same lodgings, dispossessed the enraged nobleman by violence, and Stafford in revenge called off his archers, and departing, left the Earl to sustain the shock of the battle. Pembroke thus abandoned, fought with desperate energy, seconded by his gallant brother, who twice cut through the enemy's line with his pole-axe, but though hotly contesting the victory, their exertions

July 26. 1469.

availed not against the superiority of numbers; they fell into the hands of the insurgents, and with the barbarity now so commonly exercised against prisoners of war were beheaded the next day. Modern

* History of Croyle. † Hall.

historians do not usually mention a circumstance recorded by Hall, which in some degree justifies the relentless severity of the conquerors; the chronicler informs us that after Stafford's angry retreat "Syr Henry Nevill, (a rebel leader) sonne to the Lord Latimer, took with hym certain light horse men, and skirmished with the Welshmen in the evening, even before their campe, where he did diverse valiant feats of arms, but a little too hardy, he went so far forward that he was taken and yielded, and yet cruelly slain: which unmerciful act the Welshmen sore ruied the next daie or night. The Earl of Pembroke, Syr Richard Herbert his brother, and diverse gentlemen were taken and brought to Banberie to be behedded; much lamentacion and no less entreatie was made to save the lyfe of Syr Richard Herbert, both for hys goodly personage, which excelled all men there and also for the noble chivalry that he had shewed in the felde the daie of the battayl, in so muche that hys brother the erle, when he should lay down hys hed on the block to suffer, seyd to Syr John Conyers and Clappam: 'masters, let me die for I am olde, but save my brother which is young, lusty, and hardy, mete and apte to serve the greatest prince in Christendom.' But Syr John Conyers and Clappam, remembryng the death of the yonge knyght Syr Henry Neville, cosyn to the Erle of Warwick, could not here on that side, but caused the erle and his brother with diverse other gentlemen to the number of X to be there behedded." CHAP. XXI.

We are told that Sir Richard Herbert entertained a superstitious apprehension respecting the event of the battle in consequence of the maledictions of a

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Welch hag. When Pembroke had ravaged the revolting parts of Wales, in 1463, he had ordered the execution of seven brothers, all of them men convicted of rapine, murder, and other equally heinous crimes, in despite of the anxious entreaties of their mother, that one might be spared, Sir Richard humanely joined in the afflicted parent's suit, but the earl was inexorable, and they were hanged, "at which denial," says our author,* "the mother was so aggrieved, that with a pair of woollen beads on her arms, she on her knees curst him, praying God's mischief might fall on him in the first battle he should make. The earl after this coming with his brother to Edgcote field, found Sir Richard at the head of his men leaning on his pole-axe, in a sad and pensive manner, whereupon the earl said, 'What, does thy great body apprehend any thing, or art thou weary with walking (for he was higher by the head than any one in the army), that thou dost lean thus upon thy pole-axe?' Sir Richard Herbert replied 'that he was neither of both, whereof he should see the proof presently; only I cannot but apprehend on your part, lest the curse of the woman with the woollen beads fall on you.'"

Five thousand of the royalists were left dead upon the field; and the rebels scouring the whole country, surprised the Lord Rivers, and his youngest son, Sir John Wydevile, in the forest of Dean; seized by the triumphant and sanguinary mob, immediate execution followed on the discovery of their persons. A similar fate awaited Stafford; he was taken at

* Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Bridgwater, and suffered death, either, as some say by order of the king, for the dereliction of his duty, or according to others, with more probability, by the fury of the people, incensed against him on account of his friendship with the denounced family of the Wydevilles. CHAP. XXI.

Pembroke's fatal defeat placed Edward on the brink of ruin; thousands of his own soldiers deserted him to join the popular cause, and in this extremity his only hope rested in the fidelity of Warwick.

The earl at the commencement of the disturbance was absent at Calais, attending the marriage of his daughter with the Duke of Clarence, the king had written to both requesting that they would join him, assuring them that they should be welcome, and desiring Warwick to believe that he gave no credit to the rumour which assailed his loyalty.* The earl and his son-in-law obeyed the summons, but they came rather as victors than friends; they found Edward at a village near Coventry, too weakly guarded to dispute their will. He flattered himself that the respectful salutations with which they approached him were sincere: he was speedily undeceived, yet not in a situation to betray his resentment, he acquiesced in the plans of the confederates, suffered Warwick to dismiss his few remaining followers, and accompanied the Nevills to Warwick.†

The insurgent army was now disbanded and the rebels returned to their homes enriched with the fruits of their late ravages. Edward's person was soon afterwards committed to the care of the Arch-

* Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. † Continuation of Croyle, 551.

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bishop of York, who detained him a prisoner at Middleham Castle.

The triumphant Warwick now held the destiny of two captive monarchs in his hands. The fate of the white and the red rose depended upon his nod, and both parties looked up with anxious expectation to the king-maker's decree. The friends of the House of Lancaster trusting that the earl's hostility to Edward was unappeasable ventured to steal from their hiding places. Sir Humphrey Nevill, who after the Battle of Hexham had been hunted down like a wild beast into woods and caves, quitted the rude sanctuary which had afforded him shelter for the last five years, and unfurled Henry's standard upon the Scottish marches:* but Warwick, unprepared for this result of his persecution of the Wydevilles, opposed himself to the knight's attempt; he called upon the retainers of the crown to arm themselves in Edward's name.† Here, however, the proud earl's assumption of the regal authority received a check; the nobles refused to obey this mandate whilst doubtful of the nature of his intentions towards the captive monarch, and Warwick was compelled either to make terms with Edward or to lend his assistance to the restoration of Henry; he chose the former. The circumstances attending upon the king's release are not certainly known. It is said that carelessly guarded by the archbishop he contrived to make his escape whilst engaged in the diversion of the chase, an indulgence incautiously permitted by the good-natured prelate; but his subsequent conduct to Warwick renders the

* Year Book, 4 Ed. IV. † History of Croyle.

supposition more probable that he regained his liberty in consequence of a secret negociation with his captors. The exigence of the moment demanded Edward's appearance at York where he took up his residence, giving Warwick the command of a body of men who marched northwards against the Lancastrians.

Henry's luckless partizans, overwhelmed by their enemies, were dispersed and cut to pieces; their leader taken prisoner was brought by Richard Nevill to the newly-liberated monarch, who passed sentence of death upon the adventurous Lancastrian.

The insurrection quelled, Edward hastened to the metropolis, rejoicing his despairing friends by his unhoped-for deliverance. The Duke of Gloucester, his brother, attended by a great number of the Yorkist nobles, together with the lord mayor and twenty-two aldermen in their scarlet gowns, two hundred members of the city companies in blue liveries, and a long line of knights, rode out to meet him, giving his return to London the air of a triumphal entry. The king's retinue was swelled on its arrival to one thousand persons on horseback, many of whom were accoutred in their armour; and he took a circuit through Cheapside in order to shew himself to the delighted citizens.*

The explanation which at a grand council of peers held in November Warwick and the Duke of Clarence chose to give of their conduct was graciously received; the former, perhaps in consequence of a previous stipulation, was rewarded by a grant of the office of chief justiciary of Wales, the

* Fenn's Collection, vol. i. 294.

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constableship of Cardigan, and all the other dignities enjoyed by the late Earl of Pembroke.*

Every person engaged in the late revolt, from the period of Robin of Redesdale's command until their dispersion by Warwick, was included in a general pardon, and the king endeavoured to bind the Nevills to his interests by fresh concessions. Edward hoped and believed that Northumberland, Warwick's brother, had not participated in the earl's councils; he was therefore anxious to shew him especial marks of favour, and to counteract the danger which the alliance of the Duke of Clarence with the daughter of the latter had and might still occasion, he proposed a union between the Princess Elizabeth, his eldest child, an infant of four years old, and a son of the Earl of Northumberland, the sole male heir of this too potent family.

This measure met with universal approbation, and harmony appeared to be fully re-established. The calm was unfortunately of short duration; there were too many aggravations attending on the late insurrection to admit of its being buried in oblivion. The queen had lost a father and a brother in the strife, and the death of the Earl of Pembroke, a nobleman whom Edward had exalted from a private station, must have alarmed other of the king's friends: they saw all his honours in the grasp of Richard Nevill, whose insatiate avarice of wealth and office could only be appeased by the enjoyment of every dignity in the disposal of the crown. Warwick also, notwithstanding his present favour, could not be blind to the frail tenure by which it was held. An increase of strength on the part of

* Rymer.

the king would in all probability tempt a revengeful temper to retaliate; and conscious of having sinned beyond forgiveness he seems to have been afraid to trust to the continuation of Edward's friendship. CHAP. XXI.

To outward appearance England was in a state of profound tranquillity, and Edward even meditated the invasion of France in conjunction with his brother-in-law, the Duke of Burgundy. The confusion of the dates and the bare and hurried record of events which has been alone transmitted to posterity, renders it almost impossible to give a very clear or correct account of the transactions connected with Warwick's second revolt. The Nevills it appears were again anxious to obtain possession of the person of the king; and to accomplish this important object, the Archbishop of York invited Edward to meet the Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Warwick at an entertainment given at one of his country houses, the Moor in Hertfordshire.* Unsuspicious of danger the jovial king repaired to the banquet; but as he was washing his hands before supper he received an intimation from a gentleman, who informed him in a whisper that a band of a hundred armed men lay in wait to surprise and detain him in captivity. The king, justly alarmed yet commanding his feelings lest they should betray his acquaintance with the plot, watched an opportunity to steal secretly away, mounted a good horse and rode at full speed to Windsor. His sudden flight spread confusion throughout the adverse party and filled every heart with distrust. The Duchess of York, deeply distressed by the division between her sons, laboured 1470.

* Hearne's Fragments, 302.

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with parental solicitude to restore them to confidence in each other.* By her entreaties they met in her presence at Baynard's castle on Shrove Tuesday, and again these fiery spirits were soothed into temporary amity.†

1470.

The insurrection which ensued is generally ascribed to the secret machinations of Warwick's faction; but the people were discontented with the government; they discovered that they had only exchanged the House of Lancaster for that of York without having effected the removal of those grievances which had forced them into rebellion: the same heavy and intolerable oppressions continued under their new sovereign, and the extortion of the royal household afforded ample reason for complaint. The commons of Lincolnshire sought the usual means of redress by seizing arms; they rose upon Sir Robert Burgh, a purveyor, who was particularly odious from his exactions, forced him to fly for the preservation of his life, plundered his estates, and destroyed his house with burning brands. The rebels found a leader in a knight the son of Lord Welles. The king unwilling to believe that his newly reconciled friends were concerned in the revolt, sent commissions to his brother and the Earl of Warwick to levy forces in his name, and anxious to prevent the rebellion from spreading farther, commanded Lord Welles to appear before him in the expectation that his authority would check the imprudence of his son. The vacillation of this unfortunate nobleman cost him his life; he appeared at court in obedience to the sovereign's mandate, and

* Fabian. † Fabian.

then precipitately flying with Sir Thomas Dymoke to sanctuary was again induced by an assurance of pardon to return. Edward made him the medium of an offer of the royal mercy to his son, desiring at the same time that he would exert his influence to induce him to accept it. The knight obstinately persisted in his rebellion, and the savage king, furiously incensed, inhumanly sacrificed Lord Welles to his resentment. Sir Thomas Dymoke suffered also, despite of the sovereign's pledge of safety, Marching to Stamford, Edward summoned Sir Robert to surrender, but the young man refused to treat with his father's murderer and returned a message of defiance. Edward's extraordinary celerity had enabled him to take the field before Warwick could bring up his forces, and without waiting for the expected supplies, a fortunate circumstance since they would have been turned against him, he fell upon the rebels at Empyngham in Rutlandshire. Always conspicuous in action the martial king followed up the fierceness of his attack with such overpowering ardour that the rebels utterly dismayed by the fearful havoc of the day, cast away their armour lest it should impede the rapidity of their flight. The leaders, Sir Robert Welles and Sir Charles Delalaunde, disdaining this cowardly method of retreat, fell into the king's hands alive, and suffered the penalty of their treason. A series of frightful executions, followed under the sanguinary auspices of the Earl of Worcester who again came into office as Lord Constable. Lord Willoughby was beheaded at York, and human ingenuity was taxed in the invention of new tortures to em-

Mar. 12. 1470.

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bitter the deaths of the remaining victims to a tyrant's cruelty.*

Warwick and the Duke of Clarence were within a day's march of Edward at the period in which he defeated Sir Robert Welles, not daring to join him lest their treachery should be discovered, and too weak to attack his victorious troops, they fell back upon Manchester, thus disclosing their intended perfidy. The loyalty of Lord Stanley who refused to desert the king, obliged the malecontents to direct their next movement to the western counties,† Edward was prevented from the pursuit by a scarcity of provisions, and tempted to resort once more to pacific measures, he assured them by a proclamation issued from York that he was ready to hear them in their defence, and would rejoice at the establishment of their innocence, if they would submit themselves before the twenty-eighth of March:‡ but whilst holding out a hope of pardon he did not trust wholly to the chance of its acceptance, he commanded the arrest of the confederates, and sent orders to the different counties to take up arms against them. Upon the thirty-first of March when the day of promised grace had elapsed, the king proclaimed the duke and the earl to be traitors, and anxious to supply the loss of these powerful friends, restored the titles and estates of the house of Northumberland to Thomas Percy. Edward endeavoured to reconcile the brother of Warwick who had not yet betrayed any symptoms of disaffection towards him to this unpalatable deprivation, by raising him to a higher rank as Marquis of Montague. Stow has

* Stow. † Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. p. 36. ‡ Parliament Rolls, vi. 233.

preserved the homely expression of the indignant lord upon this unwelcome elevation; he afterwards told Warwick that the king had obliged him to surrender the rich lands of Percy for a new title "allowing him a pie's nest to maintain it withal."

Edward having offered large rewards for the apprehension of the insurgent lords, marched westward in the expectation of bringing them to action; they escaped his pursuing arm by a sudden flight, and embarked on board a small fleet at Dartmouth ere he had proceeded farther than Exeter: their retreat would have been tracked with blood but for the interference of a Dorsetshire gentleman,* who rescued the Lord Scales and the Lord Audley as they were about to be beheaded by the order of the fugitives, fortunately too hardly pressed to admit of their witnessing the execution; and the opportune arrival of a friend to Edward prevented the performance of the sanguinary mandate. Warwick directed his course to Calais, which he had entrusted to the charge of a Gascon gentleman named Vaucler. Assured of a welcome reception in a town where he had always been so popular, the earl's surprise and consternation were equally great when, denied admittance, he saw the guns from the batteries directed against his ships. The Duchess of Clarence who had accompanied her husband was in extreme distress, she brought forth a son whilst the fleet was lying at anchor before Calais,† and it was with the utmost difficulty that her attendants procured two flaggons of wine from the inhospitable port. Vaucler boasting his loyalty sent a messenger to the

* Hearne's Fragments, 25. † Comines.

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King of England with an assurance that he would continue to hold the fortress against his enemies, and at the same time he gave Warwick secretly to understand that his late conduct had been actuated by friendship; there being too many partizans of Edward in the town for any hope of the safety of their enemies. The king, grateful for the Gascon's services rewarded him with the government of Calais, and the Duke of Burgundy who hated Warwick testified his approbation by a pension of a thousand crowns.

The earl sailed to Harfleur, sweeping the sea as he passed of the ships freighted by the duke's subjects; and the booty being sold in Normandy, Charles arrested the French merchants who traded in his dominions, and fresh hostilities broke out between the two countries.

Louis XI. graciously received his illustrious guests, appointing the Admiral of France to protect their small convoy from the Duke of Burgundy's navy, which had been dispatched in pursuit. Hitherto the French monarch had neglected the Lancastrian cause, but Edward had lately threatened to direct the military talents which had won the English crown in the recovery of the continental possessions so long and so gloriously attached to it; and he now felt that his own interests required a more generous line of conduct towards the deposed king. It became necessary to effect a reconciliation between Margaret of Anjou and the Earl of Warwick, and the subtle negociator found the exercise of all his genius called forth to surmount the difficulties of the undertaking. It was long before the high-spirited

queen could stoop to a friendly alliance with a Nevill: she could neither forget nor forgive the misfortunes which she had sustained from Warwick's pursuing enmity,* and but that ambition is blind, the earl could scarcely have trusted to the future favour of one whose noble spirit scorned him even in her adversity. In the event of success through Richard Nevill's prowess, the recent benefit would have been overlooked, the former injuries remembered. If Edward's ingratitude had disappointed Warwick's expectations, what could he expect from the red rose, so often and so deeply crimsoned by his destroying sword with the blood of its most faithful friends?

Warwick's eager desire to raise one of his daughters to a throne now became apparent; he offered the hand of the Lady Ann in marriage with Prince Edward: the proposal was coldly received. Edward of York as yet was unblessed with an heir, and Margaret seemed more inclined to listen to the suggestions of a friend in England, who projected the union of the two houses by a matrimonial alliance between Edward of Lancaster and Elizabeth of York, a wild scheme in the present position of affairs. The reluctance so mortifying to the proud noble was at length overcome by the persuasions of the French king, and the earnest entreaties of Margaret's household, who saw no other chance of Henry's restoration. In giving an unwilling consent the lofty-minded queen prescribed her own terms, and Warwick so long accustomed to dictate was compelled to assent to the wishes of a woman

* Harleian MSS. 543.

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whom he had hitherto successfully opposed. Jealously guarding the rights of her son, Margaret stipulated for the crown to the exclusion of Clarence, who was only to inherit in case of the heir of Lancaster's death without issue. "A strange marriage," observes Philip de Comines, "when the earl had deposed and imprisoned the prince's father, to cause him to marry his daughter, and to entertaine also the Duke of Clarence brother to the king, of the other faction, who had just cause to fear his owne estate if the house of Lancaster recovered the crown."

Warwick's almost inexhaustible resources enabled him to undertake the projected enterprize with comparatively little assistance. His letters from England were of the most encouraging description; he had carried away with him treasure sufficient for the maintenance of two thousand French archers,* and he only required a few ships, soldiers, and money from Louis. Born for extraordinary achievements, Richard Nevill's second triumph, though less glorious, was more wonderful than the first; the cause of the white rose would have been entirely ruined after the flight of York from Ludlow in 1459, but for his single and supporting arm; and now the same unbounded popularity saved its blushing rival, at the moment when it appeared to be withered and blighted beyond the hope of recovery. The earl's generous devotion to a desperate cause redounded to his honour; but his union with the house of Lancaster, the result of a selfish and headlong ambition, has cast an irretrievable stain upon his other-

* Harleian MSS. 543.

wise dazzling character. The Duke and Duchess of Clarence saw their interests sacrificed to the earl's personal aggrandizement with deep but suppressed resentment. The punishment of the duke's apostacy now commenced; breaking the fraternal tie in the desertion of the king his brother, he was abandoned in turn the moment that the success of Warwick's schemes demanded new political arrangements; and, the slave of circumstances, he was compelled to assist in the elevation of an enemy whom his family had hurled from the throne.

CHAPTER XXII.

Caution of Burgundy—Edward's rash Security—A female Envoy—The Duke's Fleet scattered by a Storm—Warwick lands—Edward is still confident—Warwick proclaims Henry VI.—Edward's Alarm—Defection of Montague—Flight of the King—Submission of the Yorkists—The King and his Friends put to Sea—their imminent Peril—Edward's extreme Destitution—Friendly Attentions of Grutuse—Burgundy's Embarrassment—The Queen takes Refuge in sanctuary—Birth of Prince Edward—his Baptism—Warwick's Triumph—Punishment of Offenders—Release of Henry—Rejoicings in France—Edward's Situation at the Court of Burgundy—State of Affairs—Burgundy's Policy—Warwick's Moderation—Flight of the Earl of Worcester—his Arrest and Sentence—public Animosity against him—Execution of the Earl—his great Learning—proud Distinction lavished on him by the Pope—his Barbarity—Lamentations of Caxton—The young Earl of Richmond—Lady Margaret's Dream—Richmond presented to the King—Henry's prophetic Speech—Margaret's Detention in France—Reviving Affection for Edward—Preparations for the Defence of the Kingdom—Margaret's unfortunate Delay—Edward's Negociation with Clarence—Burgundy's double dealing—Intrepidity of the King's Followers—Edward's Invasion—is coldly received—a Council of War—Edward lowers his Pretensions—his Oath—Montague's Inactivity—Increase of Edward's Army—Timidity of the Lancastrians—Edward claims the Crown—Reconciliation of Clarence and Edward.

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THE Duke of Burgundy's watchful vigilance had rendered him perfectly acquainted with the negociations which the king of France carried on between Warwick and Margaret of Anjou, and he transmitted

the important intelligence to Edward with an earnest exhortation that he would prepare to defend his realm; but the thoughtless and presumptuous king, too confident in his own strength despised his kinsman's repeated warnings; giving credit to the Marquis of Montague's assurances of attachment, he admitted him to his councils and merely sent a few servants to watch the conduct of the Archbishop of York, his brother.* The Duke of Clarence's league with Warwick occasioned Edward much uneasiness, and he devised a plan of separating them which was eminently successful; he contrived (an achievement not difficult to the handsome and favoured monarch) to gain over a lady attached to the suite of Isabella, who in the hurry of the flight to Calais had been left in England. Apparently indebted to Edward's courtesy for permission to rejoin her mistress, she was instructed to represent the folly and imprudence of the Duke's engagements with his present associates. Unacquainted with the secret of her commission, which this discreet ambassadress † wisely concealed even from Vauclere, she deceived that subtle person, and was allowed to pass through Calais into France, where, gaining the confidence of the duchess, she executed Edward's commands so adroitly, that Clarence promised to return to his brother at the first convenient opportunity after his landing in England. Depending upon this desertion, and despising the attempts of his enemies, Edward amused himself with his customary diversions, to the utter neglect of those precautions which could alone have checked the daring efforts of the enterprising Warwick.

* Fenn's Collection. † Comines.

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The Duke of Burgundy awake to the danger and accurately informed of all the enemy's movements, apprised Edward of the very spot appointed for the disembarkation of the hostile armament; no precaution which prudence could dictate was omitted by the anxious Burgundian, he stationed a powerful fleet to intercept the Earl of Warwick's passage: a violent storm which dispersed the ships and drove them upon opposite coasts, enabled the invaders to make the voyage unmolested; and protected by the navy of Louis, they crossed the sea and landed upon the southern coast of Devonshire. Warwick, whose recent misfortunes had endeared him to the people—who was the hero of every ballad, and whose exploits were commemorated in shows and pageants at every provincial festival, experienced the enthusiastic ardour of English affection, his ranks swarmed with multitudes gathering daily around the standard of their idol.

Sept. 13, 1470.

Edward, in the proud security of self-confidence, had laughed at the idle expenditure of money in the Duke of Burgundy's equipment of a navy for the discomfiture of so insignificant a foe:* a little shaken by the earl's invasion, he was still assured of ultimate success: "Let him land," he exclaimed, "I can match him well enough on shore;" and in the certainty of victory desired the duke to employ his ships in cutting off the retreat of the fugitives. Blinded to the reality of the perils which beset his path, by an unaccountable infatuation, though warned that the blow would be struck in Devonshire, Edward permitted the Lord Fitzhugh, brother-in-law

* Philip de Comines, p. 33.

to Warwick, to allure him into Yorkshire by a pretended insurrection. Whilst thus uselessly employed in the north, Warwick traversed the west without the slightest opposition, ordered Henry VI. to be proclaimed at Paul's Cross, and then marched with an army which acquired new strength at every step in search of the incautious monarch. The thunderbolt had fallen. The people, though unprepared for the restoration of the rival house, either intoxicated by their attachment to the popular leader, and ready to second him in any and every undertaking, or too much astonished to dispute his commands, followed Warwick with the usual acclamations, and exchanging the white for the red rose, made the air resound with shouts of "Long live Henry of Lancaster."

Edward, in ignorance of the transactions which were taking place in the south, lay near Doncaster, having his army scattered about in the neighbouring villages. From this place he summoned the retainers of the crown to repair to his banners. The expected levies came slowly in, and as the king, not yet conscious of his dangerous situation, sate at table, a friendly messenger, breathless with speed, rushed into his presence, warning him to save himself by immediate flight; the astonished monarch heard with dismay that the traitor Montague was riding through the royal troops, flinging up his cap, and crying "God save King Henry," and that six thousand soldiers had already abandoned his device and assumed the crimson badge of Lancaster.* In another moment, the Lord Hastings, the chamberlain, ascertained the truth of this alarming intelli-

* Comines.

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gence; fortunately a bridge intervened between the king and his enemies: this was immediately secured by a strong battalion of guards whose loyalty was invincible, and it being impossible to entertain the slightest hope of effectual resistance, Edward mounted a swift horse, and attended by Lord Scales, fled with the utmost celerity, leaving Hastings to make terms for those adherents whom he was compelled to abandon. This faithful friend recommended the bewildered troops to submit to Warwick for the time, and when a brighter day arose to remember their allegiance to the House of York, and then hastily following the same route which the king had pursued, accompanied by the heroic few who preferred exile to the desertion of their master's cause, overtook Edward before he reached the coast. The royalists defended the bridge until the king was out of immediate danger from a pursuit, and having obtained a pledge of security surrendered to the triumphant party.

Edward repaired with breathless expedition to Lynn, where he found two Dutch and an English vessel preparing to sail. Richard Duke of Gloucester, the Lords Hastings and Scales, a few nobles, and eight hundred followers composed his retinue, and destitute of every thing except the clothes which they happened to wear, and many entirely ignorant of their destination, they hurried on board. Edward commanded the mariners to direct their course to the coast of Holland; they obeyed, and a new danger awaited the exiles in their attempt to make the shore: a hostile fleet from the Hans towns, who had already captured many English ships, bore down

upon the convoy; and the king, deprived of the means of defence, preferred the chance of death by the waves to the certainty of being taken prisoner, he desired the captain to run the ship aground. The pirates, prevented from pursuit by the shallowness of the water, cast anchor in the expectation of securing their prize on the return of the tide;* but in the interim Grutuse, the Duke of Burgundy's lieutenant in Holland, learning the rank of the stranger, and the imminent peril of his situation, sent orders to the enemy to abstain from their meditated assault, and hastening to pay his respects to the king, conducted him in safety to the town. We are informed by Comines that Edward was absolutely penryless, and had no pecuniary means of recompensing the master of the vessel for his passage; the king "gave him therefore," says our author, "a goodly gown, furred with martins, promising one day to do him a good turne; and as touching his traine," continues the historian, "never was so poor a company seen." Grutuse defrayed the king's expenses to the Hague, and several of his followers who possessed nothing but their armour, were obliged to this gentleman's munificence for more convenient raiment. The monarch, grateful for the kindness accorded to him in his distress, upon the return of better fortune gave his preserver an English peerage, the earldom of Winchester, which he afterwards relinquished at the request of Henry VII.

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Grutuse sent intelligence of the king's arrival to the Duke of Burgundy, who we are told was exceedingly disconcerted by the unwelcome news. Comines

* Comines.

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declares that he would rather have heard of Edward's death, an event which would have permitted him to make peace with Warwick, the person upon earth whose hostility he had the most reason to fear.*

On his departure from London the king had left his consort with her mother and three infant daughters in the tower. The alarming tidings of War-
1470. Oct. 1. wick's approach reached them time enough to enable them to seek a more secure retreat; and leaving the fortress, they fled with the utmost privacy to sanctuary in Westminster, and in this forlorn condition Elizabeth was delivered of a son. This unfortunate prince was born in the midst of grief and desolation fatally ominous of ills to come. Hall, in describing the distressed state of the queen, who, he tells us, was in great penury and deserted by all her friends, adds, that the royal infant was "with small pompe christened and baptized like a poor man's child," the godfathers being the Abbot and Prior of Westminster, and the godmother the Lady Scroope.

Within the space of eleven days Warwick had chased Edward from the kingdom, and attended by the Duke of Clarence entered London in triumph. One of Nevill's first acts increased his popularity. The Kentish men had profited by the late disturbance in their usual manner, rising tumultuously and committing various enormities in the suburbs of London, which they plundered, accompanying their depredations with circumstances of peculiar atrocity. Warwick, by a prompt and vigorous exertion of his authority, quelled these disorders and brought the

* "As whome," says Hall, "he," the Duke of Burgundy, "hated more than a cocodrylle."

offenders to punishment; and the citizens, grateful for this essential benefit, esteemed him more highly than ever.* Shortly after his arrival, the "king maker," now truly deserving that title, went in great state to the tower, and liberated Henry from the prison to which he had formerly consigned him. With any other monarch this office would have been very embarrassing; but the pious Henry, accustomed to forgive his enemies upon Christian principle, was never heard to utter a reproach. The Duke of Clarence, the Lords Stanley and Shrewsbury, and other noblemen, "some," says Hall, "for fear, some for love, and some only to gaze upon this wavering world," accompanied Richard Nevill to the newly-restored king, and escorted him from the scene of his long confinement to St. Paul's, to which place, with the crown upon his head and arrayed in a gown of blue velvet, he went in procession through the principal streets of London; the versatile populace shouting "God save the king!" as he passed along. From the church Henry was conducted to the Bishop of London's palace, where he resumed the state befitting his dignity; "keeping," says our chronicler, "his household like a king."† The tidings of Henry's restoration were received in France with the strongest demonstrations of joy. Louis XI., in thanksgiving for this happy event, commanded solemn processions of the clergy and laity for the space of three days in Paris, and all the principal towns throughout his dominions; and Margaret with the young prince, who during their misfortunes had been suffered to live in poverty and

* Hall. † Hall.

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neglect, entered the capital amidst a succession of splendid pageants performed in their honour.*

Whilst these rejoicings took place in France, Edward painfully experienced the bitter effects of the fatal reverse in his fortunes. The Dukes of Exeter and Somerset were in high favour at the Duke of Burgundy's court, and the closeness of the fugitive king's connection with that prince weighed not against the strong motives which inclined him to make peace with England. The time-serving Vauderé had thrown off the mask. Philip De Comines, dispatched by his master to prevent the garrison of Calais, now in friendly alliance with France, from breaking out into open hostility, found every man arrayed in Warwick's livery, wearing his badge in their caps, the ragged staff of gold enamelled; "those who could not have it of gold," observes the historian, "had it of cloth; and so well prepared were the town's-people for the change, that in less than a quarter of an hour after the intelligence of Richard Nevill's triumph arrived, the whole population had adopted his cognizance: no house being well frequented which had not the earl's white cross painted on the door, and no man esteemed gallant who did not appear with his device."

This unequivocal expression of sentiment in the troops who menaced his frontiers, determined the Duke of Burgundy to acknowledge Henry as king; and his name was substituted for that of the luckless heir of York in the treaty formally entered into by the two powers. Edward, exceedingly alarmed by the dismal prospect which opened before him, conjured his kinsmen, for "God's love, not to abandon

* Monstrelet.

him in this distress;"* and the duke, involved in deep perplexity, was induced to submit to an unworthy artifice by promising to aid in secret the cause which he publicly disowned. CHAP. XXII.

Warwick honourably distinguished himself, both from his present and his late allies, by the superior clemency which marked his conquest. The restoration of Henry VI. had been happily accomplished without bloodshed, and only one victim was offered up to the revengeful spirit of party. John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, whose cruelties disgracing an untutored barbarian were the more inexcusable since he was reputed to be the most learned and accomplished gentleman of his time, expiated his offences on a scaffold. Aware of the danger which threatened him from the just vengeance of the Lancastrians, he fled into Huntingdonshire, and having vainly sought concealment in the green covert of a tree in the forest of Waibridge, was seized by his relentless enemies and conveyed to London, where the Earl of Oxford, as high steward, pronounced judgment upon him.† Though historians have not mentioned the circumstance, we are informed by a poetic legend in the Mirror for Magistrates, that the people thirsting for Worcester's blood, rushed upon him in his passage to the scaffold, and were only restrained from tearing him limb from limb in the streets, by the intervention of the sheriffs, who hurried their prisoner into the Fleet, and thus preserved him from this savage mode of death. The next day the populace gave a still stronger proof of their detestation; fearing lest the earl's execution should be

* Comines. † Fabian.

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again delayed by an attempt to anticipate the slow progress of the law, they gazed upon him in sullen silence, and suffered him to pass unmolested to the block. "Then," says Fuller, "did the axe at one blow cut off more learning in England than was left in the heads of all the surviving nobility."

The Earl of Worcester, succeeding to the large estates of his family by the death of his father John Lord Tiptoft,* was raised to an earldom by the munificence of Henry VI.; and early distinguished for his love of learning, he cultivated the sciences at Baliol College with brilliant success; and though honourably employed by the English government, quitted his high office to acquire fresh sources of knowledge in foreign travel.† The prejudices of the age, and the superstitions of his religion, led him to pay his devotions at the holy shrine in Jerusalem; and upon his return he spent a considerable period in Italy, visiting the libraries of Padua and Rome, whence he purchased MSS. to the value of five hundred marks, which he presented to the university of Oxford.‡ At the Vatican the earl was received with higher honours than had ever before been accorded to any Englishman. Pronouncing an oration in Latin before the Pope Pius II. and his cardinals, the pontiff, touched even to tears by the beauty and elegance of the diction, exclaimed aloud, "Behold the only prince of our times, who for virtue and eloquence may be justly compared to the most excellent emperors of Greece and Rome!"

The earl was likewise an author of no mean celebrity in his time. He translated Cæsar's Com-

* Dugdale. † Fuller. ‡ Tanner.

mentaries, and several other Latin works, into English; and though his pilgrimage to the Holy Land displayed the orthodox nature of his faith, he left an additional proof of Catholic zeal in a petition against the Lollards. Thus pre-eminent in piety and learning, it is with grief that the reader never sees the earl's name occur in history without its being coupled with some ferocious deed. Many writers have ascribed the universal hatred which produced Lord Worcester's execution, to the murder of two sons of the Earl of Desmond, whom he caused to be put to death during his government of Ireland, it is said, by the order of Edward; but the slaughter of these helpless infants, however shocking, was surpassed in horror by the cruelties which he practised in his own country. In deserting the cause of Henry, Worcester let loose the spirit of persecution upon the more faithful adherents of the house of Lancaster; and the gibbetted remnants of their mangled bodies, still blackening in the wind, made a silent yet powerful appeal to every heart alive to a sentiment of humanity. Deeply regretted by the few lovers of literature who were his contemporaries, the lamentations of Caxton, the erudite professor of the new art of printing, upon the death of this highly-gifted nobleman, have been preserved. "Oh, goode blessed Lord God!" he exclaims, "what grate losse was it of that vertuous worthy well-disposed lord! What worship had he in Rome in the presence of our holy fader the pope, and so in all places unto his deth; at which deth every man that was there might larn to die, and to take his deth paciently." And speaking again of one of the earl's

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writings, he breaks forth into a fresh strain of panegyric: "Which werke was translated by the vertuous and noble lord and erle, the Erl of Worcestre, on whoos soul I beseech Almyghty God to have mercy; and all ye that shall rede or here this sayd werke, of your charyte I beseech you to pray for him."

During the brief period of Henry's restoration, the young Earl of Richmond made his first appearance at court. Margaret, his mother, the heiress of John Duke of Somerset, was early sought in marriage by rival suitors. The king, we are told, condescended to solicit her in favour of his nephew Edmund Earl of Richmond, whom she accepted in consequence, it is said, of a dream, wherein St. Nicholas appeared to her in person to sanction the monarch's recommendation. The subsequent and almost miraculous elevation of Henry Tudor naturally gave rise to many marvellous reports, which, though deserving little credit, are striking illustrations of the credulity of the age, and may be permitted to the historian desirous of enlivening a dull or a dreary detail of revolting facts.

The Lady Margaret's first husband, of whom we know very little, died young. She married a second time into the family of the Duke of Buckingham, and losing that husband also became the wife of Lord Stanley. Upon the accession of the house of York, the only child of the Countess of Richmond and Derby was committed to the care of the Lady Herbert, and in the discomfiture of the white rose, Henry Tudor's active uncle, Jasper Earl of Pembroke, obtaining possession of his person, conducted him to London, and

introduced him to the king.* Henry, kind and affectionate to all his relations, was pleased with the princely boy, displaying at that early age the talents but not the vices which afterwards distinguished him; and upon the authority of Bacon it is reported, that gazing on him whilst performing the duties of a page, the king with a prophetic spirit observed to the surrounding nobles, "That child will wear the crown for which we are now disputing."

The long delay of the queen, who was hourly expected with reinforcements from Louis, disconcerted the Earl of Warwick. Margaret had exacted conditions as the purchase of her alliance which prevented him from acting without the concurrence of Prince Edward, and thus many important measures were necessarily postponed to the infinite prejudice of the state.† The earl, restless and anxious, dispatched the Prior of St. John with urgent entreaties that she would hasten her intended voyage to England.

The nation recovered from its first surprise began to look forward to Edward's return. The Lancastrian party discovered that it was more easy to conquer than to retain, and beheld the sandy foundation on which they had presumed to build with sentiments akin to dismay. Thus warned, the government with equal wisdom and diligence employed every precaution which prudence could dictate to damp the hopes cherished by the royal exile and his confiding friends; orders were issued for the military array of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, the midland, Wales and the northern counties.‡ Warwick took

* Hall. † Harleian MSS. ‡ Rymer.

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the command of the sea, the Duke of Clarence was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the chief magistrate of York was replaced by another supposed to be more devoted to their interests. Still Margaret did not appear; detained by adverse winds upon the coast of France, the opportune moment slipped away and she landed only to meet the crisis of her fate.*

Edward, an unwelcome guest at the court of his brother-in-law, possessed too heroic a spirit to look tamely on at the triumph of his enemies. He had lost every thing except his life, and that he was resolved to stake upon a desperate chance; the vacillations of Clarence's unsteady mind afforded a hope of assistance which the dauntless monarch eagerly grasped. Edward's mother and his sisters the Duchesses of Exeter, Suffolk, and Burgundy, were unremitting in their endeavours to detach the duke from his unnatural league with a faction for whom he must sacrifice the welfare of his family with the certainty of eliciting nothing save ingratitude in return: suspicious of the neglect and contumely which conscience whispered that he merited, Clarence listened to the persuasions which fondly and delusively flattered him with the hope that it was in his power to make atonement for the past. Edward, assured by the priests, who under the sanction of their gowns passed into every house without suspicion and were the medium of all his communications with England, of the friendly intentions of his brother, implored pecuniary aid from the Duke of Burgundy.† This politic prince issued a proclamation forbidding his

* Fabian. † Holinshed.

subjects to join an expedition which he pretended to disapprove, but secretly supplied his royal guest with fifty thousand florins, four good ships equipped at Walcheren, and fourteen well armed vessels hired by his agents from the Hanse towns.*

Sharing in the king's martial ardour, and equally reckless of all personal danger, Richard Duke of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and Lord Scales, a small but chivalrous band, committed themselves with two thousand followers to the perilous adventure. The secret wishes of the Duke of Burgundy were against them, and Warwick's power more formidable than ever; but with hearts steeled against the worst, they resolved to brave every danger rather than drag out the remainder of their existence in melancholy exile.

Upon the second of March 1471, this gallant company embarked from an inhospitable coast; they remained wind bound for eleven days, but the weather at length proving favourable they set sail and appeared off the coast of Suffolk about the middle of Lent.

Edward sent a party on shore to reconnoitre; they returned with intelligence which obliged him to seek a more secure place of landing; three gentlemen repaired on board his vessel and informed him that the Earl of Oxford was upon the alert, and that Warwick had removed the Duke of Norfolk to London, with all the principal men in the county known to favour the house of York. Thus baffled the fleet again put to sea. In imminent danger of shipwreck from a sudden and violent tempest, the small squad-

* Comines.

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ron buffeted the winds and waves for two days, losing sight of each other as they were carried along at the mercy of the storm. Hourly menaced with death by the devouring ocean, Edward, with a magnanimity perhaps the offspring of despair, determined to throw himself upon the shore at any point that he could reach; he had five hundred persons with him in the ship, and ignorant of the fate of their comrades in arms, he ordered them to disembark at Ravenspur in Yorkshire, the very spot whence Henry IV. commenced his successful march to London.* The Duke of Gloucester and Lord Scales, who were on board different vessels, influenced by the same undaunted resolution, quitted their ships and effected a landing; the rest of their band followed their example, and were scattered along the coast at considerable distances from each other.

The king advanced towards a small village, and received the next day news of the safety of his slender army, they joined him without opposition. But the country people kept aloof; no reinforcements as he had confidently expected, flocked to his standard; still he remained unmolested; the neutrality of large assemblies of men armed by the orders of Warwick, though affording little hope of ready aid, preserved him from instant destruction. Had the Earl of Northumberland been less timid or more thoroughly attached to the Lancastrian interest, he might have annihilated Edward's followers; he hesitated, and gave the monarch time to form new plans. It was however evident that no man felt inclined to hazard life and fortune in a cause which appeared desperate.

* Harleian MSS.

Under these cheerless circumstances the invaders called a council of war, and sat in solemn deliberation on their future course. Somewhat discouraged, yet still resolved against the abandonment of their project, they adopted an unworthy artifice, and not daring to trust to the sword, resorted to duplicity in the furtherance of their designs.* Dissimulation and perjury marked every succeeding step. Edward placed the ostrich feather in his cap, the cognizance of Prince Edward of Lancaster; declared that he sought only to regain the inheritance of his father the Duke of York, and advancing through the towns and villages with shouts of "Long live King Henry!" afforded the undecided populace a pretext for abstaining from attack. The strong array which in every stage of Edward's progress met his eyes, warned him that the slightest repulse would be attended by total overthrow. Before him rose innumerable perils, behind him yawned a grave; there was now no choice, and he pressed onwards with an anxious yet unwavering mind. Edward was not perplexed by any conscientious scruple, he considered the expedient alone, and free from all religious and moral controul his boldness and decision saved him where a more virtuous prince must have sunk into irretrievable ruin. CHAP. XXII.

The city of York shut its gates, and Edward was advised by the recorder to avoid the certainty of failure in an attempt to approach it; but steadily determined not to retreat he drew up his little army before the the walls, called upon the citizens to witness the sincerity of his protestations, and swearing solemnly in their presence that he had relin- March 18.

* Harleian MSS. 543.

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quished all design upon the crown, was permitted to repeat the oath on the altar of the cathedral: his troops were then allowed to enter, and halting for the night advanced the next day to Tadcaster, a solitary train whom few or none had dared to join.

The Marquis of Montague was stationed at Pontefract. It is impossible to account for this nobleman's inactivity; the news of Edward's landing must have reached him in time for the collection of those armed bands who, destitute of an active leader, were content to watch the invader's progress in silence. He had received orders from Warwick to dispute Edward's path, but imitating the suspicious conduct of Northumberland he offered no resistance. The Yorkists passed this formidable enemy at the distance of four miles; they had penetrated into the very heart of England without a single hand being raised against them, and the hopes of their secret friends reviving by this unforeseen success, the tide of fortune turned.

No longer hesitating through fear vast numbers augmented Edward's ranks, and he found himself at Nottingham at the head of a respectable force. The Duke of Exeter and Lord Oxford had assembled four thousand men at Newark, which following upon the rear of the Yorkists might have prevented farther accessions. Sharing in the universal dread of the gallant monarch's prowess, these noblemen were alarmed by the report of his strength, and retreating with disgraceful speed at a mere rumour of his approach fell back upon Warwick. The daring adventurer now unveiled his ambitious designs, he resumed the style and title of a king,

and commanded his subjects by proclamation to hasten to his standard. Warwick with a numerous army was stationed at Coventry; surprised and disconcerted by Edward's rapid advance through a country so well prepared to resist him, he made a fatal pause, and during this impolitic delay Clarence declared in favour of his brother, four thousand men under his command displayed the white rose above their gorgets.*

Avowing his faithlessness with unblushing effrontery the perjured duke sent a message to Richard Nevill, offering to procure the king's pardon and favour if he would also desert the Lancastrian cause. Warwick in the presence of the Earl of Oxford returned an indignant refusal.

Clarence joined the Yorkists at Warwick. Edward advanced at the head of his army three miles upon the road to meet him, in all the pomp of war, with banners flying and music's exhilarating strains. The brothers rushed into each other's embrace amidst the loud shouts of their soldiers, the minstrel's pealing melody and the blast of the spirit-stirring trumpet: an animated scene; but the reconciliation, purchased at the expence of honour, was hollow and unstable.†

* Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. † Continuation of Croyl.

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Edward's Challenge—he marches to the Metropolis—Weak Defence of the Archbishop—Henry's degrading Exhibition—Attachment of the Citizens to the House of York—The Archbishop's Treachery—Henry delivered up—is committed to the Tower—Edward visits his Queen—Warwick advances to give Battle—Edward hastens to meet him—Partial Engagement of the adverse Forces—Battle of Barnet—Edward's Badge—Error of the Lancastrians—their Confusion and Flight—Death of Warwick, and his Brother—Edward's Affection for Montague—Burial of the Nevills—Loss of the Lancastrians and of the Yorkists—Henry led back to the Tower—Edward's Offering at St. Paul's—Margaret lands in England—her despairing Anguish—Confidence of the Lancastrians—Loyalty of the Western Counties to Henry—The Earl of Oxford's Letter—Margaret's Fear for her Son—Edward circumvents the Projects of the Lancastrians—Error in the Position of the Lancastrian Army—The Eve of the Battle—Margaret's Despair—her Encouragement to the Soldiers—Battle of Tewkesbury—Somerset's Rashness—Death of Lord Wenlock—Flight of the Lancastrians—Death of Prince Edward—Violation of Sanctuary—Intrepidity of a Priest—Execution of the Lancastrians—Triumph of the House of York—Wenlock's Instability—Loyalty of the Earl of Devonshire—Sir John Fortescue—Interesting Records of Edward of Lancaster—Fortescue's Submission to Edward—Margaret is captured—The Lady Anne is brought to the King—Doubts respecting her Marriage—Dispersion of the Northern Insurgents—Attempt upon London—Resistance of the Citizens—Richard of Falconberg—his second Attempt upon London is repelled—Edward enters London—marches in quest of the Insurgents—Falconberg capitulates—receives an Assurance of Pardon—its Violation—Report of one of Edward's Followers—The King's Letter to the Council of Bruges.

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STRONGLY fortified at Coventry, Edward though extremely anxious to give battle to the enemy, could

not induce Warwick to quit his entrenchments. Thrice he defied the earl to end their quarrel by single combat, and unwilling to waste time in besieging a place which would in all probability hold out until the Lancastrians could pour down upon it from every point, he directed his route to London.

The capital had been committed to the care of the Archbishop of York; the Duke of Somerset and other Lancastrian leaders having proceeded to the western counties to join Queen Margaret, now upon her passage from France. Warwick dispatched messengers to his brother with earnest entreaties that he would keep the city for three days. The prelate's efforts were faint and easily overpowered; disappointed by the small number of his supporters, whose musters did not exceed seven thousand men, he strove to infuse a new spirit of loyalty by displaying Henry to his people. Mounted on horseback and decked in royal robes, the king rode in procession through the principal thoroughfares of the city; but the appeal was made in vain, the spectators turned away in cold contempt, and the useless pageant was only productive of new humiliation to a monarch destitute of every quality necessary to recommend him to his martial subjects.* Always attached to the House of York, the whole population of London ardently desired the return of Edward. Self-interest it is said had some share in the present decision in his favour, extravagant and profuse the king owed large sums to the rich merchants, and their only chance of payment rested in his success. Their wives, either fascinated

* Fabian.

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by the affability of his manners, or more criminally interested in behalf of a profligate admirer, espoused his cause with characteristic enthusiasm; the sanctuaries were crowded with his partizans, whose swords were ready to leap from their scabbards at a word, and alarmed by the determined spirit manifested by Edward's party the prelate's firmness forsook him, he relinquished the gates to a more faithful guard, the friends of the white rose, and careless of the fate of his brothers, purchased pardon from the king by a perfidious and dastardly submission.

April 11, 1471. Edward entered the city upon the eleventh of April and proceeding to the bishop's palace received his luckless rival from the hands of his betrayer: a base and cruel action on the part of the archbishop, for Henry anxious to escape to sanctuary had been detained in London by the man so deeply pledged to defend his crown and person.* The triumphant monarch sent his royal captive to the Tower, and repairing to the cathedral at Westminster returned thanks to heaven for the prosperous issue of his dangerous enterprize: this pious duty performed he visited the queen in her obscure yet sacred retreat, and pressed his infant son with grateful rapture to his heart.

Recovered from the consternation produced by the overwhelming rapidity of Edward's movements, Warwick advanced to London, hoping either to find it still in the hands of the Lancastrians, or to surprise his enemy at the holy duties which the

* Fenn's Collection, 508.

season enjoined.* The active king aware that his conquest must be perfected by the sword was accurately informed of the enemy's approach; and withstanding all the temptation offered by his love of luxurious ease, resumed his armour and marched out to meet and repel the foe. Edward's army only consisted of nine thousand men, for the people had grown cautious and refrained from the open display of sentiments which might expose them to danger. The contending parties came in sight of each other late on Easter even, the scouts of both meeting in the town of Barnet, where after a short skirmish Warwick's outriders were beaten back. Edward passed through the town, and covered by the darkness of the night, stationed his forces close to those of his adversary; but fortunately not within the range of their artillery, which kept up an incessant yet useless cannonade. Edward commanded his troops to maintain the most profound silence, that Warwick might be kept in ignorance of his movements, and the dawn scarcely discovered his position to the enemy, a thick mist attributed at the time to the magic arts of Friar Bungay, a reputed sorcerer, obscuring both armies.† Each were drawn up in three divisions, Warwick appeared at the head of the left wing, and entrusted the right to Montague and Oxford, whilst Somerset led the centre. Edward stationed himself between the Duke of Gloucester and Lord Hastings, to whom he gave the command of the right and left.‡

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April 14, 1471.

* Account of King Edward the Fourth's second invasion of England.—*Archæologia*, vol. xxi.

† Stow. ‡ Hall.

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The combat lasted for three hours, each side fighting with equal fury, and victory for a considerable period hung doubtfully upon the rival banners. In the midst of this bloody and remorseless strife, a fatal accident decided it in Edward's favour; he had taken for his cognizance a sun in full glory,* and the retainers of the Earl of Oxford bore a star paled with rays. Warwick's men mistaking the latter device for the badge of their enemy, fell upon their friends: surprised by the attack, and suspecting that they were betrayed by a treachery too frequent in the civil wars, they shouted "treason," and fled the field. Nothing remained to the Lancastrians save defeat and death. Warwick made a gallant attempt to rally the retreating host, and plunging into the centre of the battle fell covered with wounds. Montague shared the same fate, perishing, according to the statements of some writers, in open fight with the enemy, or, by the report of others,† from the weapons of his own party, exasperated by the sight of Edward's livery, which he was preparing to assume. The Duke of Exeter was supposed to have perished also; but, though desperately wounded, life was not extinct, and discovered by his servants amidst the slain, they conveyed him at night to the nearest sanctuary. Ox-

* Hall tells us that on the morning of the battle of Mortimer's Cross, "the sunne appeared to the Erle of March like three sunnes, and suddainly joined all together in one," and that upon the sight thereof, deeming it a good augury, he set fiercely upon his enemies and put them to flight. After this success Edward is said to have adopted the sun in full glory for his cognizance; a fortunate emblem, to which he was chiefly indebted for his triumph at Barnet Field.

† Dugdale.

ford and Somerset escaped, and Edward left master of the field, gazed upon the lifeless body of Richard Nevill with triumphant exultation. The earl's late aggressions had obliterated the remembrance of all his former services, and neither party could regret the death of a man whose restless caprice had involved both in ruin. The perturbed spirit had fled. The king-maker lay upon the earth, a bloody corse. Edward's joy at the destruction of his enemy was damped by the loss of the Marquis of Montague, Warwick's brother: it is said of this amiable but unstable nobleman that the king loved him entirely, and that in consequence of his undiminished affection to his old companion in arms, he permitted burial to both the Nevills.* They were exposed for three days in St. Paul's Church, with their faces uncovered to convince the wondering world that its idol was now only dust; but no indignity was offered to the cold remains, they were committed, without suffering decollation, to their respective coffins, and interred together with great solemnity in the tomb of their ancestors, at Bilsam Abbey.

Hall bears testimony to Edward's attachment to his early friend. "The common people saied that the kynge was not so jocund nor so joyous for the destruction of the erle, but he was more sorrowful and dolorous for the death of the marques."

The number of the slain on both sides is variously reported. A fragment amongst the Harleian MSS. mentions that Warwick's loss alone amounted to seven thousand men. John Paston, who was in the action, states that more than a thousand were left upon the

* Hall.

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field, a slaughter scarcely sufficient to occasion a total rout in a battle which was so obstinately contested. Three nobles were killed on the part of the Yorkists, Lord Cromwell, Lord Say, and Sir Humphry Bourchier, the heir of Lord Berners. The king had taken Henry with him into the field, and returning to London in proud triumph led the unfortunate Lancastrian in his train as a captive. Proceeding immediately to St. Paul's, he paid his humble and grateful devotions at the altar, offering at the same time the standards which he had taken from the enemy.*

A month alone had elapsed since the tempest-tost exile attended by a few intrepid followers landed on the English shore, and in that short space with comparatively small assistance from hesitating and lukewarm friends, he had traversed the kingdom and won his crown again. It only remained for the conqueror to preserve his present lofty position, his vigilant eye searched every point which threatened danger, and he was ready at the first blast of the war-trump to take the field again.

Windbound upon the coast of France during twenty most important days, Margaret with late and vain solicitude endeavoured to bring over the long expected succours: a change in the weather at length enabled her to set sail, and she landed at Weymouth on the very morning on which the disastrous battle took place on Barnet Field. Upon her arrival the queen repaired to Cerne Abbey, where the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Devon brought her the melancholy intelligence of Warwick's downfall. Stunned by the appalling news, her courage,

* Fabian.

hitherto so dauntless, was not proof against the shock; she sunk upon the earth overwhelmed with despair, and only revived to utter those piercing lamentations which are wrung from the bitter anguish of a fainting heart. The surrounding nobles strove to inspire her with better hopes; far from being dispirited by the earl's defeat, they spoke confidently of future success, and pointed out to their dismayed auditor the fertile resources which still remained.* The western counties had long been in a state of active preparation, and obeying the call of their leaders, fresh and numerous forces appeared upon the field. Lord Oxford had joined Jasper Pembroke in Wales; the account of the earl's escape is preserved amongst the Paston letters, wherein he desires the countess, to whom the confidential epistle is addressed, to send all the money that she could raise, together with as many men as could be provided with good horses, directing at the same time that they should "join him by stealth, at divers parcels."† The earl's letter gives a lamentable picture of the instability of servants and dependants at this unhappy period. He tells his correspondent that he quitted his men and fled alone, having reason to suspect that his chaplain intended to betray him; yet notwithstanding his experience of the open hostility of the Yorkists, and the secret treachery of pretended friends, he was still sanguine in his expectation of ultimate triumph, and he concludes with an expression of unwavering confidence: "Be of good cheer and take no thought, for I shall bring my purpose about, by the grace of God." The queen's friends had taken up their quarters at Bath, whence

* Harl. MSS. † Fenn's Collection.

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they proposed to join their partizans in Wales, an alliance which would have placed them at the head of an irresistible force. Margaret anxiously solicitous for the welfare of her son, earnestly requested that he might be allowed to quit the kingdom; she felt a presentiment of evil, and her strong natural affection prompted the removal of her darling from the reach of Edward's destroying sword.* The queen's intreaties were unavailing, and her fears overruled, the presence of the young prince was deemed necessary in the existing state of affairs, and he remained to take the chance of war.

The Lancastrians having raised their levies, pressed forward on the route to Wales. Edward's vigilance had prepared a check at Gloucester which produced a change of plan; the citizens by his orders fortified the bridge, and turning off by Tewkesbury, the close pursuit of the Yorkists obliged them to pause and give battle. The queen, impressed with melancholy feelings, looking anxiously to the river, which she was desirous to pass lest it should cut off the retreat, she deemed would be the too probable result of the unavoidable encounter; and she urged her friends to cross this dangerous obstacle before the enemy could come up; but weary with a long and rapid march, they preferred a situation close to the town, as it would afford rest and refreshment to the harassed troops. It appears by the statement of modern writers that the military leaders committed a fatal error in the choice of their ground. Dyde, upon surveying the spot, remarks, that "if the position of the Mythe eminence had been chosen, the right of the army would have been covered by the Se-

* Hall.

vern, and the front by the Avon, and by an ascent so steep as to make any attack in front very hazardous; and in this situation the army might have waited in safety till the Earl of Pembroke had joined it."*

Edward came up in the evening and posted his forces within three miles of the enemy.† The night was spent by both parties in anxious preparation. It was an interval of fearful suspense to Margaret; the heroic constancy, which had supported her through so many dangers, gave way, and her broken spirit was oppressed with a heavy weight of despondence. As the morning advanced, she shook off this dejection, and steeling her grief-worn heart to the task, rode with her son round the intrenchments, spoke kindly and cheerfully to the soldiers, and promised large rewards to those who should prove faithful and courageous.‡

The Lancastrians had raised a steep rampart in their front, and the strength of their fortifications appeared to defy assault. The Yorkists were drawn up in three divisions, the vanguard was entrusted to Gloucester, a prince who never failed to be in the foremost rank; Edward commanded the centre in person, and the rear was led by Hastings and the Marquis of Dorset, of the Wydeville family. The king found his adversaries very advantageously posted under the protection of dikes and ditches, which it was difficult to pass; but Gloucester pushed boldly on, brought his artillery to play upon the barriers, and rained his arrows like hail upon the enemy: they withstood the shock, and the duke was compelled to give way. Somerset eager to follow up his advantage rushed out to the attack, beat back his

May 4, 1471.

* History of Tewkesbury. † Harleian MSS. ‡ Ib.

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assailants, and carried death into the centre of Edward's host. In the midst of his career the duke was checked by the alarming conviction that he was fighting almost alone. The Yorkists, recovered from their first surprise, were in turn pursuers. Somerset regained his entrenchments, and found Lord Wenlock, of whose support he had been assured, standing idle with his troops, either struck by a sudden panic, or meditating a revolt to Edward: goaded to madness the infuriated duke staid not to inquire whether he were a coward or a traitor, but riding fiercely to the spot clove his skull with one stroke of his battle-axe. Distrust seized upon all; unable to distinguish friends from foes the dismayed Lancastrians had lost their energy, and now made only a feeble resistance. Gloucester advanced and planted his victorious banner in the heart of the enemy's camp; he was followed by Edward, and fresh assailants pouring in, Somerset overwhelmed with the certainty of ruin, faint, wounded and betrayed, relinquished the ineffectual struggle, and sought shelter in a neighbouring church; whilst his flying troops spread themselves through the parks and fields in wild confusion.

In the Harleian MSS. it is stated that Prince Edward died fighting on the field, but all other writers affirm that he was taken prisoner with Queen Margaret, and brought before the king. The ferocious monarch asked him "Why he had dared to appear in England in arms?" The young hero undauntedly replied, "To recover my father's kingdom and my own inheritance." Edward enraged struck the spirited prisoner on the face, and the surrounding

ruffians, truly deserving the appellation, whether knights or nobles, only awaiting a signal from their brutal master, buried their swords in his body, and he fell transfixed with unnumbered wounds. CHAP. XXIII.

Determined to exterminate the whole of the Lancastrian party Edward even violated the privileges of sanctuary, an outrage hitherto unattempted by the most sanguinary conqueror: he rushed to the church with his sword drawn; a priest shocked by the intended sacrilege planted himself firmly at the door, and holding up the host in his hand, interposed the sacred symbol between the monarch and his devoted enemies.* The pious ecclesiastic wrung a reluctant promise from Edward's lips; he assured him that the lives of the fugitives should be spared: but two days afterwards repenting this clemency he renewed the attack, and sending an armed force the Duke of Somerset, the Prior of St. John, and eleven others were dragged from the foot of the altar. Gloucester sate in judgment upon these victims, and Somerset covered with the blood which had streamed from his wounds in the late battle was hurried to the scaffold, and perished with his friends; the last and the most unfortunate of the Beauforts.

This was the ninth splendid yet barbarous victory which Edward had achieved; it secured his throne; the red rose lay crushed and scattered beneath his feet, and nothing now could have shaken the power of the House of York save its internal dissensions and its ruthless crimes.

Lord Wenlock, the victim of Somerset's indignant revenge, affords a striking instance of the mutability

* Leland.

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of the times. Rising to honours through the favour of Henry VI. he was knighted, made constable of Bamborough castle, and chamberlain to the queen: acquiring great wealth in the liberal monarch's service, he was enabled to lend his master a considerable sum, for which he received an assignment of the tenth and fifteenth granted by parliament in 1456;* he was made Knight of the Garter, and fighting valiantly on Henry's side at the first battle of St. Albans, left the field desperately wounded: yet deserting the cause of the red rose, he joined the Duke of York in 1459, and was in consequence included in the attainder passed on the duke's party by the Lancastrian parliament. At the battle of Towton Lord Wenlock strengthened young Edward's ranks with his followers, distinguishing himself by his gallantry; the conqueror recompensed him for his former loss by the office of chief butler of England: he was also employed in several important embassies, created a baron, and advanced to the honourable post of lieutenant of Calais. But notwithstanding all these favours he again revolted and joined Warwick in the restoration of the deposed king.

The Earl of Devonshire, whose unwavering fidelity offers a bright contrast to the fickle Wenlock, was the third Courtney who lost his life in the cause of the red rose: blotted from the list of the peerage by Edward's orders after the battle of Towton, the earl-
1469. dom was bestowed upon Lord Stafford, beheaded the same year at Bridgewater, but the intrepid noble refusing to relinquish his title, opposed the Yorkists

* Pennant.

in many a bloody field. After the earl's death at Tewkesbury the family lay for a long time apparently extinct; but under Henry VII. it revived again: Edward the next heir was restored to his honours,* and marrying a daughter of Edward IV. involved the ill-starred race in new misfortunes; persecuted throughout the latter part of Henry VIII.'s reign, the last descendant in the direct line died in exile after the accession of Mary.† CHAP. XXIII.

The rivers of blood shed at the battle of Tewkesbury at length ceased to flow. One of the desolate Margaret's companions was spared, Sir John Fortescue, a learned and upright lawyer, justly esteemed the brightest light of the age. Enjoying the confidence of Henry VI., and advanced by him to the highest offices in his profession, he remained incorruptibly faithful to the red rose, shared all the wanderings of Queen Margaret, and employed the period of his retreat in France in directing the studies of the young prince; his work *De Laudibus Legum Angliæ* was composed expressly for the accomplished boy's instruction; it explained the nature of the English constitution as a limited legal and not absolute monarchy, and it is still considered for its clear-

* Camden.

† Reginald Courtney was the first of this family that came into England, being brought hither by Henry II. and by him advanced with the marriage of the heir of the barony of Okehampton, for that he procured the marriage of the said king and Eleanor of Poitou and Aquitain. Our historians tell us, that the branch of the family that seated itself here was derived from the royal house of France; but however that matter may be there is one branch still in France known by the title of Princes of Courtenay as being lineally descended from Louis Le Grosse, King of France; another branch came to be Emperors of Constantinople, and enjoyed that dignity three or four descents; another branch seated itself in the East, where Jocelyn de Courtenay, famous in the holy wars, was made Count of Edesse.—*Camden.*

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ness and solidity one of the most admirable treatises of its kind. Under the able tuition of this excellent and highly-gifted man, taught to respect the rights of the subject, and acquainted with the important duties of his station, there is infinite reason to believe that had the life of Edward of Lancaster been spared, he would have become a shining ornament upon the roll of English kings.

The slight records which are extant concerning young Edward's brief career cannot fail to impress the reader with very favourable ideas of that most unfortunate prince; cradled in sorrow, pursued throughout infancy by the keenest blasts of adversity, and perishing by violence at the early age of seventeen, his history presents a continued series of tragical events; but inured to hardships and trained to arms by the fierce amazon his mother, a heroine who never trembled until her son's life was in jeopardy, the magnanimity which he displayed at Tewkesbury gives evidence of an undaunted courage worthy of his descent from John of Ghent and his chivalrous house; for whether falling in defence of his father's crown upon the crimson field, or in bearding the conqueror whilst unarmed and a prisoner, and defying him with noble disdain in his own tent, the circumstances of young Edward's death are equally glorious.

The king, capable of appreciating the worth and talents of Sir John Fortescue, rendered his imprisonment light; and when he had leisure to attend to domestic affairs, sought to engage so brilliant a luminary in his service, and having faithfully adhered to the Lancastrian cause until farther efforts were

utterly hopeless, he accepted, or as it is stated in the petition which appears on the Parliamentary Rolls, asked grace of the king. Gratitude and personal affection it is most probable had connected him with Henry, for upon that monarch's death and the entire extinction of the house of Lancaster, Sir John Fortescue wrote in defence of Edward's title, a work which his unblemished integrity affords sufficient proof was the result of a firm conviction of the incontrovertible right of the Yorkists to the crown: and still retaining and avowing the sentiments which he had formerly expressed, he manifested the consistence of his political principles in a second treatise upon the difference between an absolute and a limited monarchy, composed in English for the benefit of Edward IV., wherein he explains the latter to be the legal constitution of England, and advocates its merits upon various grounds. Thus this honest councillor dared address instructions to the sovereign upon his throne, similar to those which with less risk of offending he had given to an exiled prince. and covered with years and honours he closed an active, virtuous, and notwithstanding the reverses sustained with Margaret, prosperous career at the advanced age of ninety.*

Margaret of Anjou, at the commencement of her last and most disastrous conflict, had retired to a monastery in the vicinity of Tewkesbury, where she was taken prisoner by the victors; yet spared the sight of Edward in the first flush of his inhuman triumph, she was not brought before him until he had moved to Coventry.

Warwick on his departure from France had left

* Biographia Britannica.

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his wife and daughter in attendance on the queen. The countess sailing in a different vessel arrived at Portsmouth, where the afflicting intelligence of her husband's death reached her, and no longer interested in the struggle for the crown, she hastened to indulge her melancholy within the walls of a holy edifice, and took refuge from a sanguinary world in the abbey of Beaulieu. The Lady Anne, Warwick's daughter, in all probability only the betrothed of Edward, since there is no account of the celebration of her marriage, remained with the queen, and was captured at the same time.* 'Though anxious to rescue the lady from the charge which has produced that splendid but satiric scene of Shakspeare, where she is made to disgrace her sex by the exhibition of an unpardonable weakness, it must be confessed that Warwick committed a dangerous error if he trusted to a reluctant promise wrung from the high-souled Margaret at the period of her deepest adversity, and neglected to secure the throne in his family beyond the power of recall.

Edward after the victory at Tewkesbury proceeded northwards to disperse the Lancastrians, who had obeyed the summons of Margaret's party; the news of the monarch's advance, and the fatal issue of the late battle prevented a recurrence of hostilities; relinquishing a fruitless attempt they threw away their arms, and prudently retired to the shelter of their homes.

In the mean time fresh disturbances took place in London, occasioned by a desperate effort to rescue Henry from the Tower. A bastard son of the Lord Falconberg had been entrusted by Warwick with a

* Harleian MSS.

naval command, he had scoured the seas in triumph; made numerous captures, and landing,* though now too late, attracted immense multitudes of the Kentish freebooters to his standard. These men had already reaped rich harvests in the pillage of the suburbs, and were willing to second any enterprize which promised the spoil of the city: at the head of seventeen thousand adventurers† the bastard assaulted the capital, a force which if collected and brought up previous to the battle of Barnet, would in all probability have given perpetual sovereignty to the red rose: but Edward's celerity and good fortune enabled him to attack his enemies before they could concentrate their partizans; and he defeated in succession the hosts of those leaders which had they been permitted to join must have proved irresistible.

The mayor and aldermen shut their gates upon this new assailant, and he retired to Kingston; but though baffled in his attempt to restore Henry to liberty, he could not abandon the hope of plunder, and being well provided with ships and cannon he returned again to the charge; his lawless followers thirsting for spoil were divided into two bodies, who made a simultaneous attack upon Aldgate and Bishopsgate. The Londoners, aided by several knights and nobles hastening from the adjacent counties to their assistance, made a vigorous resistance; a strong out-work which protected the bridge effectually repulsed the enemy in that quarter, and Lord Rivers issuing from a postern gate of the Tower, then under his command, at the moment that the mayor attended

* Harleian MSS. † Hall.

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by the flower of the nobility rushed out at another, the rout became general, and the banditti fled with precipitation to their ships: sixty houses were burned on the bridge, and a wide conflagration in other parts of the city marked the devastating progress of the insurgents. Repulsed but not vanquished Falconberg retired into Kent, and drew up his troops at Blackheath, whence learning that the king was moving forwards with an army of thirty thousand men he again retreated, and entrenched himself at Sandwich, where he possessed a navy of forty-seven ships. Edward entered London on the
1471. twenty-first of May, and eagerly bent upon the reduction of the Kentish rebels, remained in the metropolis only for a single day, and passed with all his array to Canterbury.

Falconberg despairing of success in an encounter with such an overwhelming force, took advantage of his strong position to sue for peace; he should rather have trusted the ocean which lay open before him, than the worthless pledge of Edward's promise. The expedience of accepting the rebel's offers was discussed in the council, and after long deliberation the king consented to receive his submission, and to accord forgiveness to an intrepid spirit who still possessed the means of producing new commotions. The Duke of Gloucester was appointed to convey the monarch's assurance of pardon on the surrender of the town and ships which were given up on the twenty-sixth of May, in the full confidence that life would be the reward of obedience. In the September following Falconberg experienced the fallacy of his hope of Edward's grace; the treacherous monarch

revoked his word, and the yielding prisoner suffered a traitor's death; his head, a ghastly monument of the perjured king's dishonour, was placed upon London bridge, "looking towards Kent."*

The last enemy was subdued, and one of the followers of the triumphant prince concludes his account† of the rapid and important conquests achieved by this invincible champion of the white rose in the following words:—"Thus then may be now seen how, with the aid of God and our lady, Saint George and all the Saints, the final expedition and proper recovery of the just title and right of our Sovereign Lord the King, Edward the Fourth, to his kingdom of England is at length completed and terminated, within the space of eleven weeks; during which period, through the grace of God, he has by his great good sense and excellent policy, undergone and escaped many eminent perils, dangers, and difficulties; and by his noble and valourous conduct has won two great battles, and dispersed divers great assemblages of rebels in various parts of his kingdom, great numbers of whom although as powerful and as wickedly disposed as possibly could be, were withal so terrified and overpowered by his chivalrous courage, that they were put into utter confusion. It clearly appears then, and is as firmly believed, that with the assistance of the Almighty (which has never been wanting to him from the very commencement to the present hour) our sovereign lord will, in a very short time, pacify the whole of his

* Fenn's Collection, vol. ii.

† Translated from a French MS. in the Public Library of Ghent, and printed in the 21st vol. of the Archæologia.

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kingdom, so that peace and prosperity will increase from day to day to the great honour and praise of God, to his own singular and famous renown, to the signal joy and consolation of his people, his friends, and valiant allies, and to the confusion of his enemies and evil-minded men."

Edward displayed his exultation at the brilliant success which had rewarded his gallant struggle for the crown of England, and his gratitude to those friends who had afforded sympathy and assistance in his dreary exile, in a letter addressed to—

1471. May 29.

"The Nobles and Burgo-Masters, Sheriffs, and Council of Bruges. Edward, by the grace of God, King of England and of France, and Lord of Ireland, to our very dear and special friends, the Nobles Men, *Escottelles*, Burgo-Master, Sheriffs and Council of the town of Bruges, and to each of them, health and happiness.*

"Very dear and special friends. We thank you as much and as cordially as we can, for the good cheer and great courtesy, which from your benevolent affection it did please you to bestow on us, and demonstrate so graciously and profusely for the good and consolation of us and our people, during the time that we were in the said town; that we consider ourselves greatly beholden to you, and that you know in effect how dearly we prize it, as we never can do sufficient for you and for the said town; signifying to you, that it has pleased our blessed Creator, by his grace, to give us since we left the said town and arrived in this our kingdom, such good and pros-

* Archæologia, vol. xxi.

perous fortune, that we have obtained the victory over all our enemies and rebels, so that thereby we have peaceably retaken possession of our said kingdom, crown and regalia, and are very duly obeyed, as by the bearer of these presents you can be more fully informed. For which we return and give very particular thanks and acknowledgment to our Creator, who very dear and special friends we pray may always have you in his holy keeping.

"Given under our seal, in our city of Canterbury, the 29th day of May. Signed,

"EDWARD."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Death of Henry VI.—Suspicions concerning it—Gloucester's Share in that dark Transaction—Afflictions of Henry VI.—Character of that Monarch—his Funeral—Veneration of the People—Parsimony of Henry VII.—Margaret's destitute State—Misfortunes of her Father—The Queen ransomed—she quits England—Flight of the Lancastrians—their Shipwreck—their Reception in Bretagne—Exploits of the Earl of Oxford—Intrenchment at St. Michael's Mount—Mutiny of the Soldiers—Oxford capitulates—Penury of Lady Oxford—Miseries sustained by the Duke of Exeter—his melancholy Fate—Imprisonment of the Archbishop of York—his Release—Edward's Treachery—Pillage of the Archbishop's Property—his Exile, Imprisonment and Death.

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HENRY of Lancaster's mysterious death took place in the Tower of London during Edward's absence. It happened opportunely for the House of York; and the sanguinary disposition of the king and of his brother the Duke of Gloucester would sanction the report that he fell by their hands or by their order; if indeed the numberless calamities heaped upon the stricken monarch had not reduced him broken-hearted to the grave. The opinion current at the time that he fell by violence unsupported by more substantial evidence is weak and inconclusive.

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Few kings have been permitted to die without a supposition that they were hastened to the tomb by sinister means. The monk of Croyland, in relating the event, ejaculates this solemn prayer: "May the Almighty spare and allow time for penitence to him, whoever he were, who dared to lay sacrilegious hands upon the Lord's anointed." Many writers think it probable that the historian would have named the assassin had he not been restrained by his rank; and upon the death of Gloucester no one hesitated to ascribe the crime to his insatiate dagger; but Richard had subsequently imbrued his hands in infant blood, and the perpetration of a deed so black rendered men credulous in the belief of any former atrocity. In the Harleian MSS. it is positively stated, that "the king, incontinent after his coming to London, tarried *but one day;*" but he was going in search of a military leader distinguished for courage and conduct, who had already attempted the release of Henry; and the promptitude of decision which formed one of Edward's most striking characteristics might certainly have induced him to destroy the only person who could now dispute the throne. That he commissioned his brother to commit the murder seems most unlikely, if there were other weapons to whom he could have entrusted the bloody work. Lord Rivers had the command of the fortress in which the wretched king was imprisoned. The assassination, if performed by a vulgar hand, could scarcely have been accomplished without his sanction; and no tongue, however malevolent, has dared to cast the imputation on this chivalric nobleman's unspotted name: it is the necessity of his being a

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party to the dark transaction which affords the strongest proof of Edward's innocence; unless we adopt the popular belief that Gloucester was the instrument. Henry was doubtless too closely watched to admit the possibility of the intrusion of any person of meaner rank into the place of his confinement, without the king's especial order, and the concurrence of the commander of the fortress; but Richard was only eighteen, and at this early period could not have formed either plan or hope of obtaining the crown, which subsequent circumstances threw so fatally in his path; nor can we scarcely suppose it possible that for his brother's sake he should have volunteered the act, and have quitted the scene of his triumphs, the glory of a public entry into the metropolis, where congratulating thousands thronged to meet him, to steal into the tower and glut a brutal appetite for blood. The Harleian MSS. also contain the following account of the king's death. After detailing the lamentable occurrences which had befallen Queen Margaret and the Prince of Wales, the writer says, "the certainty of all which came to the knowledge of the said Henry, being in the Tower, not having afore that, knowledge of the said matter. He took it to so great despite, ire and indignation, that of pure displeasure and melancholy he died."

Always of a weak constitution, the afflicting events of the last few weeks were of themselves sufficient to bring Henry to the grave. The cold and averted looks of the citizens of London during that painful pilgrimage wherein distressed royalty vainly sought for sympathy and protection; the

disappointment of the last hope of gaining refuge in sanctuary; the horror of being delivered up to the savage hearted Edward; and the fatigue and anxiety which the king must have endured when dragged to the battle of Barnet, might have sapped the foundation of a frail existence, without the last appalling blow. Cold and callous must have been the heart which could have sustained these repeated shocks unmoved, and Henry, though patient and almost uncomplaining under the heaviest afflictions, was not destitute of feeling; he endured his trials with meekness, trusting that having suffered the punishment of his sins in this world, he should find mercy in the next, a ground of consolation afforded by a holy resignation to the divine will, and a deep sense of human infirmity.* It is therefore more than probable that Henry wearied by a long conflict with despair yielded up his soul in the gush of mortal anguish which followed the fearful communication of the fall of his friends, and the untimely fate of the hope, the heir, the promise of his declining house.

Henry's heart was pure and open, guileless and simple as that of a child; his virtues comprised the whole circle of the Christian charities; liberal, courteous, just and beneficent, his benevolence was as boundless as his clemency was untiring; unaffectedly pious every thought and action was governed by a religious principle. Never offending others, yet always ready to forgive the most flagrant insults and injuries, he fulfilled the scriptural command to the letter; and the very soul of integrity, he was never

* Hall.

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known to utter a falsehood, to forget a promise, or to stoop to the slightest equivocation. Yet all these admirable and excellent qualities were rendered nugatory by the errors of the monarch's education and the imbecility of his mind; not permitted by his tutors to form in early life an acquaintance with the world, ignorant of business, and too amiable even to suspect the existence of vice, Henry trusted with implicit confidence to ministers of whose fitness he was not capable of forming a judgment, and with the most anxious desire to pursue the right path the weakness of his understanding continually led him astray.

The placability of his own spirit deceived him with the delusive hope of effecting a reconciliation between the ambitious and the restless, and totally unconscious of the evils of his administration Henry sought only to sooth the angry tempers of factious men. In the midst of regal splendour the abstemious monarch lived a hermit's blameless life; the pleasures and temptations which surrounded the throne possessed no charms for his uncontaminated heart; he turned from vain pomp and frivolous amusements to domestic joys, and the performance of religious exercises constituted his chief delight: his time was principally employed in the perusal of pious works; constant at church, and irreproachable in his demeanour, he knelt with lowly reverence to his devotions, offering a fruitless example to the thoughtless courtiers in his train, who were wont to sit down or walk about with careless indifference during the service.

Henry interposed his authority to prevent the

admission of swords and spears into an edifice consecrated to a God of peace, nor would he allow it to be made the scene of worldly business or idle conversation; he loved to inculcate those virtues which he practised himself with such undeviating rectitude, more especially to the young, and addressed mild but earnest exhortations to his visitors to avoid evil and to live in accordance with the holy precepts of their religion.* Strictly chaste himself, he was shocked by any deviation from propriety in dress or conduct in females, and turned away from some lightly attired damsels at a ball, with a strong expression of disapprobation, "Fie, fie, for shame. Forsooth, ye be to blame." CHAP. XXIV.

Willingly Henry would not have permitted the loss of a single life upon the scaffold. Learning that one of his household had been robbed he gave him twenty nobles as a remuneration, advising him to be careful of his property in future, and with perhaps ill-judged humanity requesting that he would not prosecute the thief: nor was he less merciful to aggressions which concerned himself, he sent pardons with anxious haste to those whom he was allowed to save, though about to suffer for treason: and horror-struck by the sight of a mangled quarter of some hapless wretch impaled upon a stake at Cripplegate, he exclaimed, "Take it away, I will not have any Christian so cruelly treated on my account!" Conscientiously abstaining from the bold language of his more daring companions, Henry never suffered the oaths uttered by licentious nobles in his presence to pass uncensured, and holding the vain

* Blakmen.

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distinctions of dress in contempt, he was plain in his apparel, and averse to the parade and ostentation displayed by men proud of their rank, he expressed his displeasure at the violent knockings on his door when a great lord came to visit him.

Henry was a warm encourager of learning. King's College, at Cambridge, and the public school at Eton, remain illustrious monuments of his love of science; the magnificent plan of the former was left unfinished in consequence of the troubles occurring in the founder's unhappy reign; but he had the pleasure of seeing the nursery for this college, which he had instituted at Eton, rise under his paternal direction. Fond of the conversation of the young and innocent the king took delight in talking to the scholars when they came over to the neighbouring castle at Windsor, on visits to any of his servants; upon these occasions he condescended to instruct them in their pious and moral duties, nor did he send his admiring auditors empty handed away, a present of money accompanied the homily, and he dismissed them with this gentle exhortation: "Be good lads, meek and docile, and attend to your religion." Apprehensive that the example of profligate nobles would counteract these precepts, Henry was unwilling to see the young students at his court.

Ill calculated to meet the exigencies of the times, and unhappily linked to an imperious woman, who, in releasing him from the controul of his guardians subjected him to more dangerous dependance, Henry, warmly attached to his subjects, anxious for their welfare, and without a single crime alleged against him, lost the national affection, the two

crowns which his gallant forefathers had won, and finally his own life; falling a victim either to unconquerable distress of mind or to the dagger of an assassin.

The king's remains were conveyed to St. Paul's Church, and exposed according to custom for one day, that the people might satisfy themselves of the truth of his decease; they were afterwards interred with little solemnity at Chertsey, the sum expended upon the deposed monarch's funeral amounting only to thirty-three pounds six shillings and eight-pence, which included the fees to torch-bearers and priests, the Holland cloth and spices which enveloped the body, the pay of two soldiers from Calais employed to watch the corpse, the barges to Chertsey, and eight pounds twelve shillings and three-pence distributed in charity.*

After a short period, gracious recollections of the meek-spirited prince revived in the hearts of his subjects; they visited his tomb with affectionate reverence, and reports were spread of miracles wrought upon the hallowed spot. Richard III. in imitation of the popular conduct of Henry V., removed the corpse from its obscure grave and caused it to be reinterred with more fitting honours at Windsor; a circumstance certainly favourable to the opinion that he was not accessary to the death of a man whose memory he thus needlessly revived. Upon the accession of Henry VII. the various excellencies of the royal martyr, offering a dazzling contrast to the black catalogue of crimes which stained the house of York, became the favourite theme of

* Rymer's Fœd.

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conversation, and the new king made a faint attempt to ingratiate himself with his subjects by a bargain with the Holy See for the reputed saint's canonization, but the pope was too exorbitant in his demands for the niggard spirit of a prince lately advanced to regal wealth; he demurred at the price, and the project dropped.

Some writers have suggested that it was not the expense alone which diverted Henry VII. from his pious purpose. Lord Verulam says, "The general opinion was that the pope was too dear, and that the king would not come to his rates." But a modern author* has observed, "It is more probable that the pope, who was extremely jealous of the see of Rome, and of the acts thereof, knowing that King Henry VI. was reputed in the world but for a *simple man*, was afraid that it would tend to diminish the estimation of that kind of honour, if there were not a distance kept between *innocents* and saints." Hearne, whose head was full of *jure divino* right, adopts this reasoning, and adds, that the pope knew that Henry was not king *de jure*, but only *de facto*, and a poor creature. Habingdon remarks, "However the world was assured of his piety, there was much question of his government, so that he might be termed a just man, but an unjust king."

The widowed and childless queen of Henry remained a prisoner in the victor's hands until she was redeemed by the unceasing efforts of parental solicitude. Regnier her father, titular king of Sicily, was so miserably impoverished by repeated losses that his exhausted treasury could not furnish a ransom suited to the dignity of a crowned head. "His

* Gough.

virtues,"* says his historian, "had not exempted him from misfortunes. He had married Isabella daughter of Charles I., Duke of Lorraine, and heiress of that duchy, which was solemnly adjudged to him by an imperial decree; but in asserting his rights against Anthony Count of Vaudemont, the heir male of the family, he was defeated, and with the battle he lost his liberty. After five years imprisonment he indeed recovered his freedom, but in order to be involved in new troubles. Queen Jane of Naples made him her heir, and in disputing with the house of Arragon for her succession, he underwent strange turns of fortune and great variety of dangers: but was at last driven entirely out of the kingdom of Naples." The same ill-fate pursued him in every other acquisition, and even the concessions made by the Duke of Suffolk, so disastrous to himself and to England, were unproductive of lasting benefit to this unhappy prince. "The county or duchy of Anjou," continues Baudier, "was given him upon the marriage of his daughter Margaret to Henry VI., by a treaty to which that king and Charles VII. of France were parties; but though he had done great service to the French in the conquest of Normandy, and expelling the English out of France, Louis XI. thought fit to seize Angers and all the province of Anjou into his own hands. It was the country in which Regnier took delight above all others, and it was with great regret that he was obliged to quit it: but he was too old to engage in a war, and too weak to contend with the power of France. This affliction was the greater

* Baudier's Calamities of Margaret of Anjou.

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because unexpected, and brought upon him by a prince whom he conceived to be his friend; but having no remedy beside patience, he retired into the county of Provence, the only part of his dominions now left him, to spend the remainder of his days. Nothing disturbed the quiet of Regnier in that retirement but the miserable condition of his daughter Margaret, whom he was not able to deliver from her imprisonment. He had been treated too ill by Louis XI. to expect any thing from the friendship or generosity of that prince. He knew what favours were got from him must be obtained by purchase, and therefore gave the succession of Provence as the price of his daughter's liberty. Louis and Regnier met at Lyons in the year 1475, where after a multitude of caresses from the former, Regnier made his will, and by an irrevocable act declared him his heir in the county of Provence, upon condition that Louis should pay the Queen of Sicily, his second wife, if she survived him, a reasonable and sufficient dower, procure the liberty of his daughter Margaret of England, and assign her an annual pension in France to support her train, and enable her to live honourably according to her rank and quality. In consequence of this agreement Louis treated with Edward for the ransom of Queen Margaret, which was at last settled on the thirteenth of November in that year, in consideration of the sum of fifty thousand crowns of gold, which the King of France was to pay Edward, and of Margaret's renouncing all claim to any dower, jewels, or other things to which she might be en-

titled or pretend a right on account of her marriage with King Henry."

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Thus after undergoing innumerable vicissitudes, and sustaining reverses which would have been fraught with death or madness to a spirit less stern and resolute, this lion-hearted woman retired from the scene of her glory, her conflicts, her vengeance, and her defeat, to spend the remnant of existence in profound obscurity, powerless alike to produce evil or to effect good, and only recalled to remembrance in the kingdom which she had ruled for so many years by the crimson graves of those whose blood had flowed in her service, or by her command.

Jasper Tudor Earl of Pembroke, after the battle of Tewkesbury, no longer thought of resisting the house of York, nor could he hope to find a safe asylum in any corner of a kingdom which owned Edward's sway; he therefore prepared to retreat; and though the Countess of Richmond, unwilling to part with her son, suggested that there were castles in Wales strong enough to afford him refuge, he would not trust the last scion of the Lancastrian line to any place of doubtful security, and promising to act a father's part by the proscribed youth, then only fifteen, he prevailed upon the anxious mother to commit him to his care. The provident earl had intended to seek shelter at the French court, trusting that Louis, with whom Henry of Richmond was connected by his grandmother, the dowager queen of Henry V., would have afforded them protection; but the vessel in which he had embarked with his charge was driven by a tempest on the coast

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of Bretagne, and the shipwrecked sufferers were seized and made prisoners by the reigning duke, Francis. This prince, fortunately for the exiles, was both humane and honourable; he treated them with great kindness during a captivity which lasted above twelve years; and steadily resisting the entreaties and promises of Edward, uneasy whilst a single member of the rival family remained alive, positively refused to deliver them up to the tyrant's blood-stained hands, notwithstanding the strong necessity which he was under of soliciting assistance from England, on account of the persevering enmity of Louis of France.

The Earl of Oxford, after the victory of Tewkesbury, was also compelled to adopt new measures. He was in possession of ships and men; and although all hopes of restoring the Lancastrian dynasty were at an end, he disdained either to submit to the conqueror or to hide himself in some obscure retreat; accordingly he commenced a predatory mode of warfare for the purpose of supporting himself and his followers. In the command of a small fleet of twelve sail the earl scoured the narrow seas to the terror of the merchantmen; and having surprised the strong fortress of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, entrenched himself there, where for a time he bade defiance to all assailants. The reduction of this daring marauder, who seems to have renewed the old baronial custom of living by the saddle, became important. The earl not only made incursions upon the neighbouring counties, spoiling and pillaging his enemies, but kept alive a spirit of resistance to Edward's government by corresponding with the

Lancastrian party. It was at one time reported that a hundred gentlemen from Norfolk and Suffolk were preparing to join him, and that large sums of money were remitted to him through the medium of intriguing priests.* CHAP. XXIV.

The king sent a force under Sir Henry Bodrigan to besiege the Mount, which was unsuccessful. The earl was well provided with provisions, and might have held out for several months longer, had not symptoms of disaffection appeared in the garrison. He was in danger of being made prisoner by his own soldiers, and in this extremity, Sir John Fortescue, an old friend, having superseded Sir Henry in the command of the royal troops, he surrendered even upon the hard conditions which Edward offered. The king refused to spare the lives of two of De Vere's followers, Lord Beaumont and Sir Richard Laumarth; the royal mercy was extended to the rest, but the earl's great estates were confiscated, and he was only permitted to exist in close confinement at the castle of Ham near Calais.

The Countess of Oxford, sister of the illustrious Warwick, was reduced to a state of abject poverty by the misfortunes of her husband. Constrained to work at her needle† for bread, the means were in-

* Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. p. 133.

† The amazing quantity of embroidery which decorated the attire, furniture, and banners of the Nobles, furnished employment to the female portion of the community, whose exploits with the needle almost surpass the wonders achieved by their male relatives with the lance. A passage occurring in the Paston Letters shews that it was not only the lower orders who made a profit of their industry—"And tell Elizabeth Paston that she must use herself to work readily, *as other gentlewomen do*, to help herself therewith."—*Fenn's Collection*, vol. i.

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adequate for her support, and the charity of the humane eked out the rest, until the house of York, with tardy compassion for the miseries of her situation, allowed her a hundred pounds per year from the imposts of wine in the port of London.*

The fate of the remaining Lancastrians was equally severe. The Duke of Exeter, the last of the Hollands, had been the godson of Henry VI; and though so closely allied by marriage to the rival house, continued steadfast in his attachment to his weak and reckless master. Upon the total ruin of the red rose, disabled by wounds, and driven into sanctuary, he grew tired of fruitless contention, and longed anxiously to end his days in peace, hoping that the influence and mediation of his wife would obtain a pardon from the king: but this merciless princess, "own sister," observes Andrews, "every way to Edward," beheld her husband's affliction with an unpitying eye, and took advantage of the period of his distress to snap the holy tie which bound them together; instead of supplicating the monarch in his favour, she procured her own divorce; and the duke, despairing of succour through her means, and weary of his long incarceration in Westminster, ventured to quit his asylum. The plans of the unhappy wanderer are unknown; he probably tried to cross the sea in an open boat, and was drowned in the attempt; his lifeless body washed on shore on the coast of Kent, gave melancholy evidence of the tragic conclusion of his chequered career. It is remarked as an extraordinary circumstance in this family, that one of its members, the father of the last duke, died

* Speed.

in his bed.* Amid the richest and most sumptuous peers in England, the duke had suffered the extremes of fortune, and as the balance preponderated in favour of Henry or Edward, flourished in luxurious affluence, or languished in want and beggary. Puissant in his magnificent palace near the bridge in London, at the court of the Duke of Burgundy he sued for the casual bounty of a stranger's hand.

The Archbishop of York had been committed to the Tower for form sake, to screen his treacherous conduct towards Henry VI. Upon Edward's arrival in London from Ravenspur, a writer of the Paston letters says, "He hath his pardon and shall do well." He was shortly afterwards released and apparently restored to the monarch's friendship, but the share which he had taken in Warwick's conspiracies rankled deeply in the heart of an unforgiving prince, whilst the magnificence of an establishment little inferior to that of the king-maker, offered an irresistible temptation to unblushing avarice.† Lulled into fatal security by the deceitful sunshine of court favour, the archbishop dreamed not that the king meditated a deep revenge, at the moment in which he loaded him with caresses. The prelate had been invited to join a royal hunting party at Windsor, and Edward with gracious condescension proposed to pursue the sport at the Moor in Hertfordshire, the favourite place of Nevill's retirement: delighted with this mark of distinction he made splendid preparations for the visit; the family plate, which during the dangerous position of his affairs he had been induced to conceal, was brought from the

* Pennant. † Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. p. 65.

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places wherein it had lain buried; and by the account of Stow, he even borrowed similar treasures from the neighbouring peers, whose presence he had solicited to grace the festival.

On the day previous to that which Edward had appointed for the commencement of the sport, he sent for the archbishop to Windsor, and accusing him of corresponding with the Earl of Oxford, ordered him into immediate arrest, confiscated his property, and seized upon the plate, valued at twenty thousand pounds. The regalia was enriched by the transformation of the prelate's mitre into a crown, and the king divided the jewels with his son, whom he had created Prince of Wales: whilst their unfortunate owner, hurried to a prison, was removed afterwards for greater security to Guisnes castle, where he lingered in deep affliction for three years, being liberated only a few weeks before his care-worn spirit fled.*

* Leland. Stow. Rymer.

END OF VOL. I.

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